Adventure Time™

The Art of OOO

By Chris McDonnell

Introduction by Guillermo del Toro





U.S. $35.00
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ADVENTURE TIME: THE ART OF OOO is the first book to take fans behind the scenes of Finn the Human's and Jake the Dog's adventures in the post-apocalyptic, magical land of Ooo. Packed to the seams with concept art and storyboards, this lavishly illustrated tome offers an all-access pass into the Emmy Award–winning show team's creative process. *The Art of Ooo* traces series creator Pendleton Ward's early influences and work, then reveals how the writers, storyboarders, animators, and voice actors work in tandem to bring this wildly inventive series to life.

Fans will pore over early character sketches, as well as background paintings and rare glimpses into the series' show bible. This visual treasure chest is gilded throughout with commentary from all the show's key creative talent. *The Art of Ooo* is the perfect companion to and celebration of this groundbreaking, award-winning series.



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ADVENTURE TIME™

THE ART OF OOO

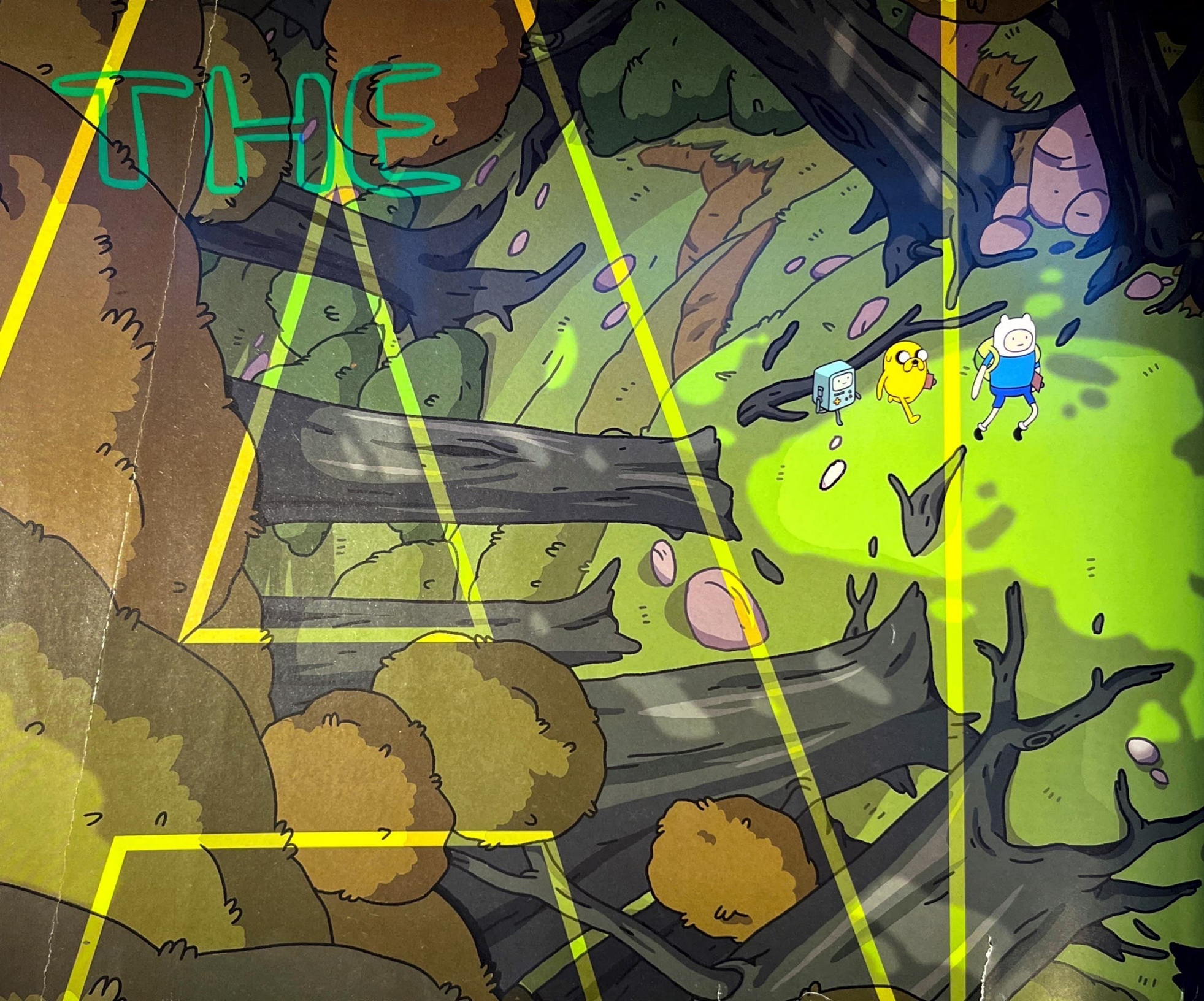
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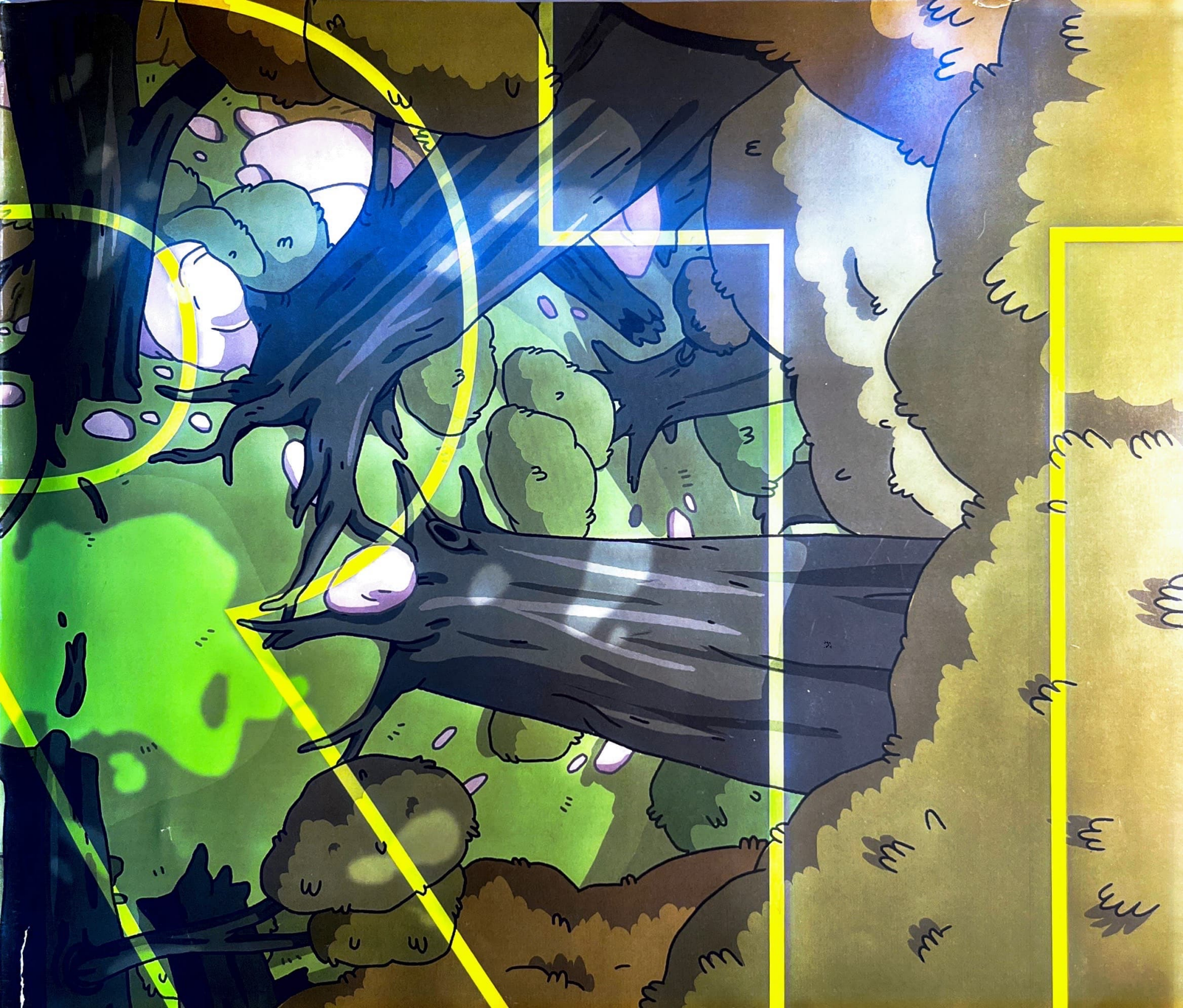
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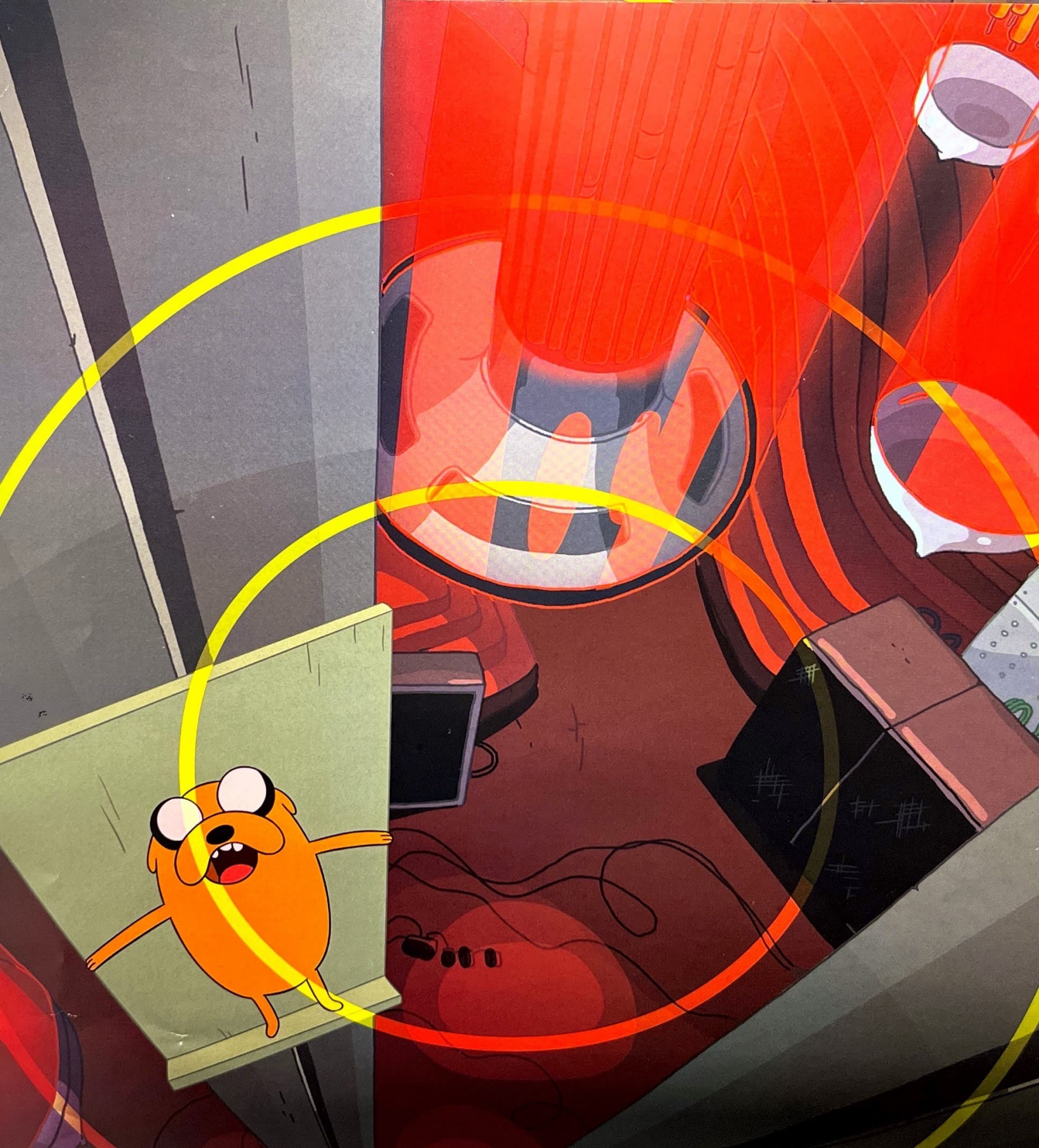
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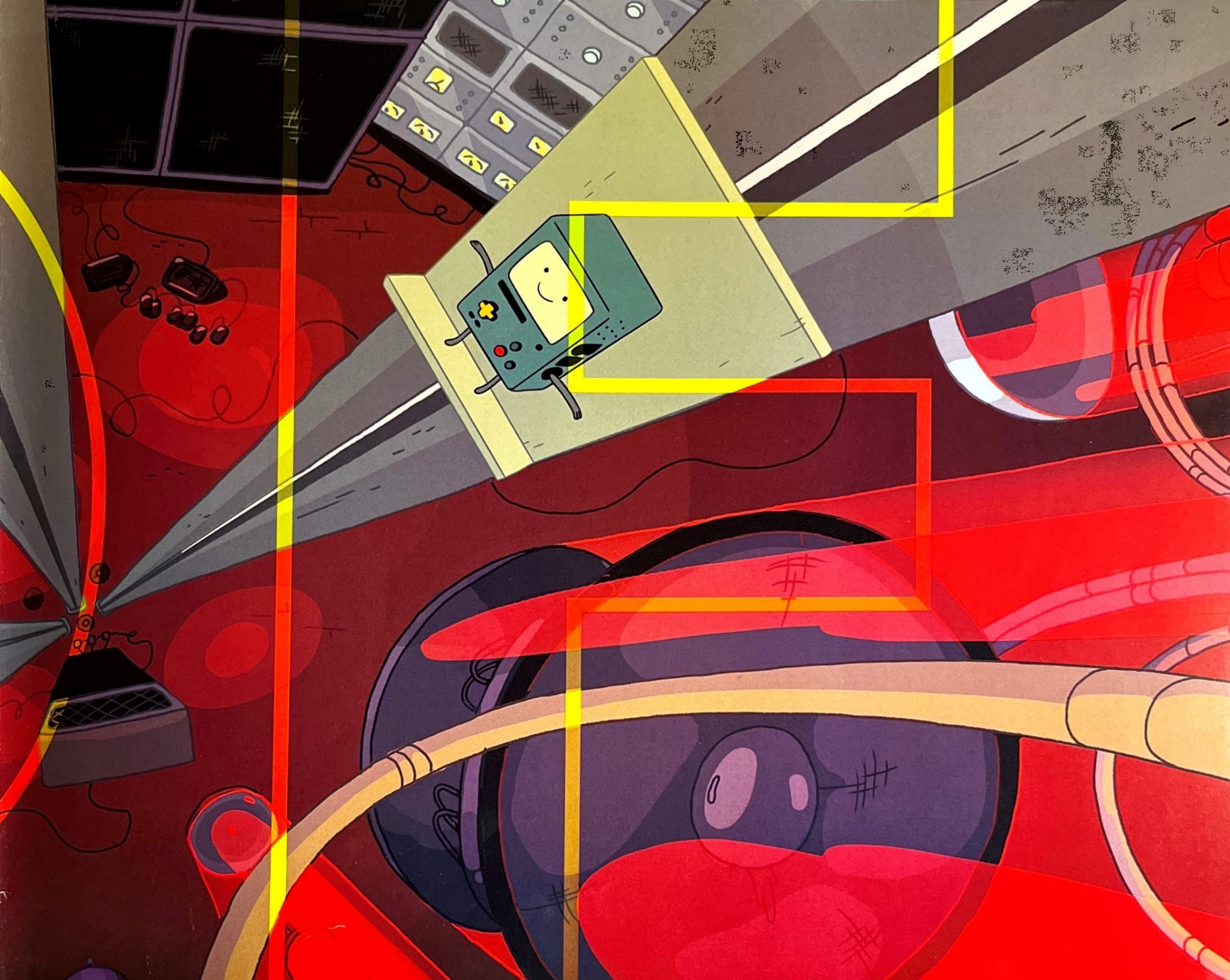


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Opposite: Lead designer and storyboard artist Andy Ristaino's cover artwork for the *Adventure Time: Explore the Dungeon Because I DON'T KNOW!* video game.

Introduction: LOSS, CANDY, AND BACON. IMPRESSIONS OF A FAN OF ADVENTURE TIME.

It is the rarest of tales that can be told with the ease of a child. The tale that is suspended in midair by a state of grace and the wonderful flow of the mantra "And then . . . and then . . ."

And it is the rarest of voices that can achieve that sense of uncomplicated flow. *Adventure Time* is such a miracle. It inherits both the great mantle of fantasy literature and world mythology and spins them around. It's easy to tell that its creators are attuned to a range of works, from Michael Moorcock to Matt Groening to Joann Sfar or Hayao Miyazaki, and yet this is belied by the utter originality of their storytelling.

In the weeks previous to the release of *Adventure Time*, there was great commotion at Casa del Toro. My two daughters were fidgety and excited about the show's debut. My wife and I remained oblivious, having partaken with them a few *Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack* episodes, but entirely unprepared for the narrative wonders to come.

I am now addicted to *Adventure Time*; actually, I am in awe of it. The show is cohesive and fluid—as if it all sprang from a single voice and a single hand. This is testament not only to Pendleton Ward's strong personality (and the great care the team around him has taken to decipher and absorb it) but to the purity of his initial vision.

The ease with which Dungeons & Dragons users speak of characters and myth has been combined with the idiosyncratic, free-flow sense of narrative that first permeated the underground comix of the sixties, and then the animated output of MTV, Mike Judge or John Kricfalusi, and, lest we forget, *The Simpsons*. But





above and beyond all these influences, *Adventure Time* is animated by incredible humanism. One that has its basis in the effortless bromance of Jake and Finn, yes, but one that also understands pathos, fragility, and loss. This poetic breadth combines perfectly with a childish fascination with bodily functions or the remarkable complexity of its female characters.

Marceline, Bubblegum, Flame Princess, and others show a sophisticated, multidimensional understanding of what it is to be a girl in a boy's world. They are strong, independent, and loyal, but they can also be volatile, emotional, and cruel when necessary.

The tales connect because at the core of every character story in *Adventure Time* exists a kernel of pure, nonjudgmental truth. Loneliness, loss, the impossibility of love, or the purity of a good bowel movement are equally important. *Adventure Time* effortlessly manages to tackle subjects big and small but always essential. The grand adventures narrated in each episode, the enormity of the stakes (the end of cosmos, a fiery end to the planet), contrast with the mundane discussions of clean underwear, or bacon as a food group in itself. Contrary to Hollywood dictum, the characters are the story and its structure is not



Opposite: Personal artwork of Turtle Princess (above) and Finn and Jake (below) reading, created for the Burbank Public Library by Andy Ristaino.

Left: Personal artwork of Finn and Jake by lead designer Matt Forsythe.

Right: Background art from a dream sequence in the episode "Lemonhope Story II." This episode's backgrounds were designed by Santino Lascano and Derek Hunter, painted by Sandra Calleros, Ron Russell, and Teri Shikasho, and color styled by Catherine E. Simmonds.



dictated by a creaky three-act structure—it stays infuriatingly real by simply being in awe of the world and its characters, by being profoundly in love with it all.

Adventure Time speaks and belongs to the "now," but does it not by looking around for what's "hot." It embodies the angst and circumstance of the day-to-day and the aesthetic malleability of our culture while leaving us with the sense that we are watching a true classic in the making: a work that will endure. *Adventure Time* has a depth of myth and uses it nimbly but to its full power. The throwaway nature of the series' cosmology, or genesis or backstory (my man the Lich comes to mind—go, Ron!), is built upon a lore that is as solid as it gets and as perfect as any worthy creation in the fantasy genre—I can enjoy it side by side with Fritz Leiber, R. E. Howard, or Clark Ashton Smith.

I have wept softly several times while watching an *Adventure Time* episode and, being that the Ice King is my favorite character, I did so more than once during the tragic Simon Petrikov and Marceline arc. At home, we shudder with joy every time Lemongrab screeches, and marvel at the emotional purity of such a compulsive creature. Marceline incarnates the dreams of cool of both girls and boys, and through her and the varied musical universe of the show, we are introduced to a sonic landscape of minimalistic score and amazing songs.

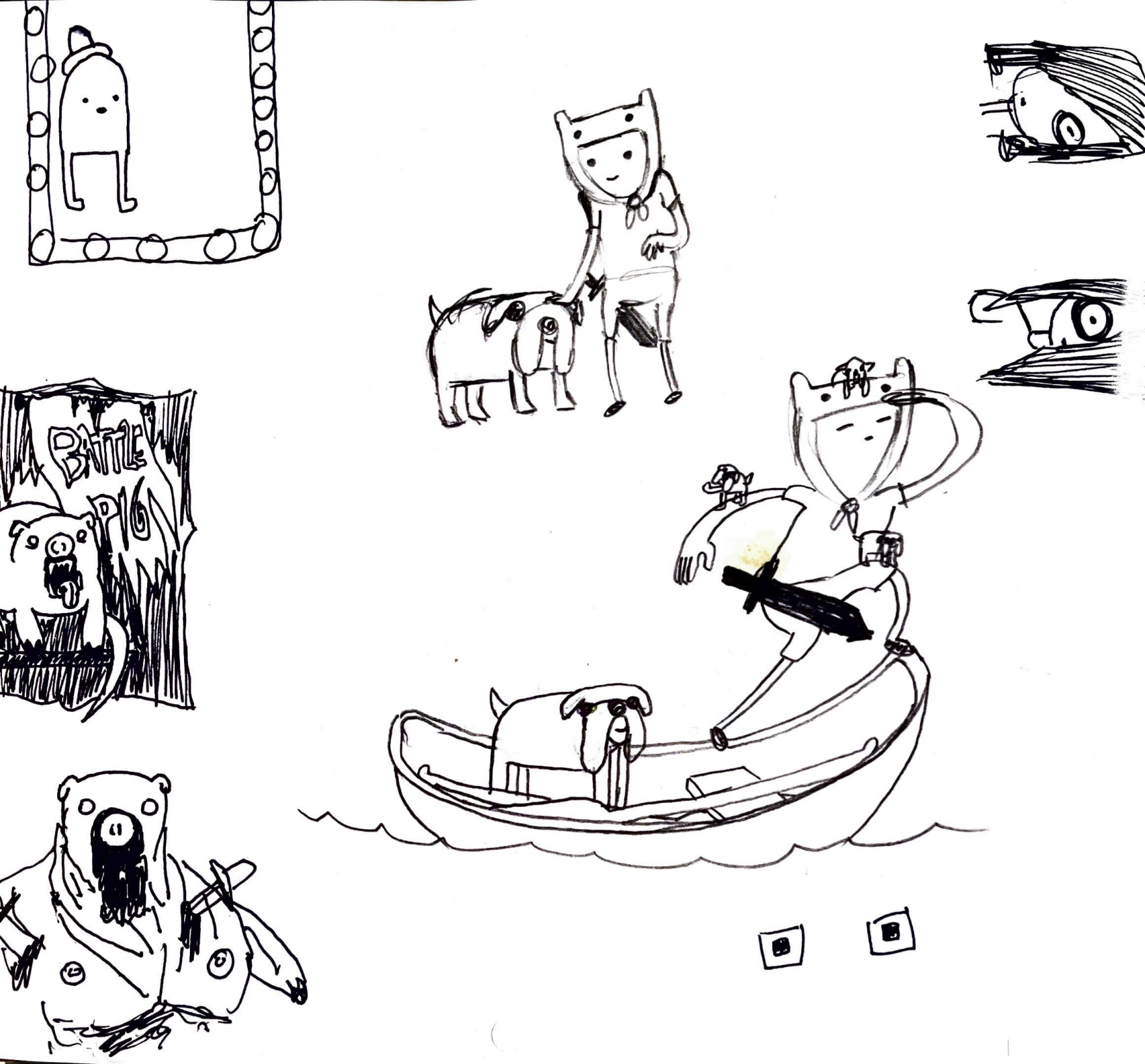
Ooo is a world to get lost in, one that is, like ours, both simple and deep—tragic and full of wonder. It stands tall and alone in our audio-visual landscape. It is a landmark, a watershed, and, above all, it is my favorite flavor in the ice cream bin of our world. And like any good pint of ice cream, you cry puzzling tears of joy while you eat it—because it nourishes you and embraces you and drives you to hope, and because nothing—nothing—can be this good.

But it is.

Guillermo del Toro
Toronto, Canada, spring 2014




DAWN
OF
OOO


BATTLE
PIG



When *Adventure Time* first arrived at Cartoon Network, it was just an animated short and a rough-hewn pitch with an offbeat concept cooked up by an untested creator. The short featured Jake, a shape-shifting magical dog who could download dance moves from the Internet with his mind, and his best friend Pen, a young boy full of enthusiasm for adventuring and helping people in need. There was also a flying Rainicorn who cooed in bubbly gibberish (later changed to Korean in the series proper), a belligerent Ice King, and a benevolent Princess Bubblegum. The characters were noodle-limbed and dot-eyed; the colors were bright and cheerful. On the surface, this might not have been the obvious choice to bet on—the network needed a new hit show to carry it into the future, and *Adventure Time* was an unlikely candidate. But there was something at the core of this concept that Cartoon Network and fans of the short immediately recognized: Creator Pendleton Ward and his crew had laid the foundations for something truly special. With *Adventure Time*, they were building a magical, post-apocalyptic, dungeon-littered, monster-infested fantasy world called Ooo that was rich with storytelling and visual possibilities, but the series still revolved entirely around the genuine, easy relationship of two best friends. This blend of world-building imagination and emotionally earnest heart kept hooking people in, and the freshness, realness, and weirdness of its execution kept making people believers. The unlikely *Adventure Time* would have a shot, after all.

Years before *Adventure Time* and the devastating Great Mushroom War that begat Ooo, there was Pendleton Ward. Pen grew up in San Antonio, Texas, with his mother, Bettie Ward, and found a creative focus early in life. Around age seven or eight, Pen learned the basics of cartoon animation. "As soon as I figured out the secret of moving drawings, I was hooked. I knew what I wanted to do."

Bettie, a painter, immersed Pen in the visual arts. She arranged for animation instructors to lecture to the students at the North East School of the Arts in San Antonio, which Pen attended. At home, doodling Post-it-note flip-books was a favorite activity. "I was really into post-apocalyptic movies and worlds, and I did a lot of flip-books about that kind of thing."

It wasn't the family-friendly films from Disney or slapstick cartoon shorts from Warner Bros., MGM, or Fleischer that inspired Pen. "When you're a kid, you're trying to make sense out of stuff, and you're trying to be older." The adult humor of *The Simpsons*, the grittiness of superhero comics, and the fantasy adventure of video and role-playing games provided the thrilling themes that helped Pen aspire to maturity.

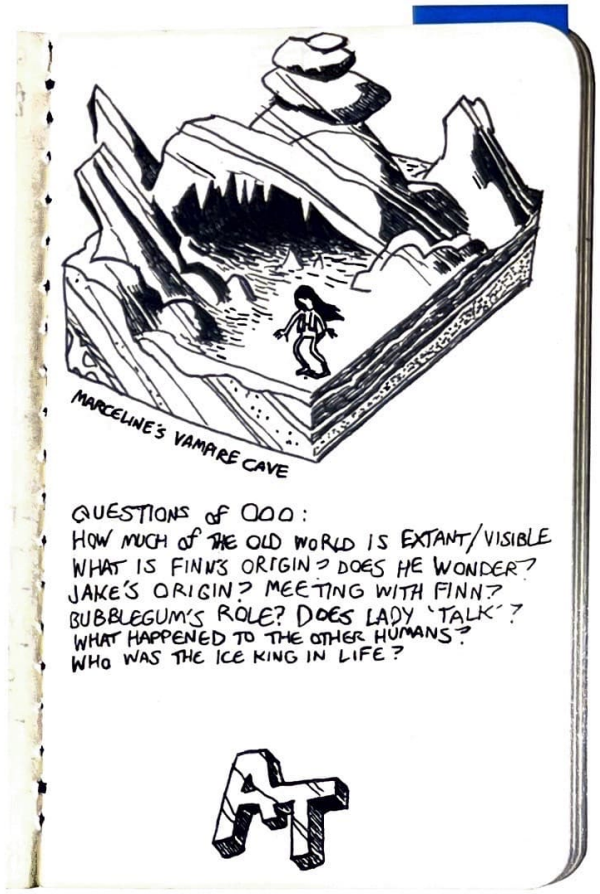
Pen's childhood *Simpsons*-watching habit was so devout that his mother's most effective method of punishment was not to say "No TV!" but instead, "No *Simpsons*!"

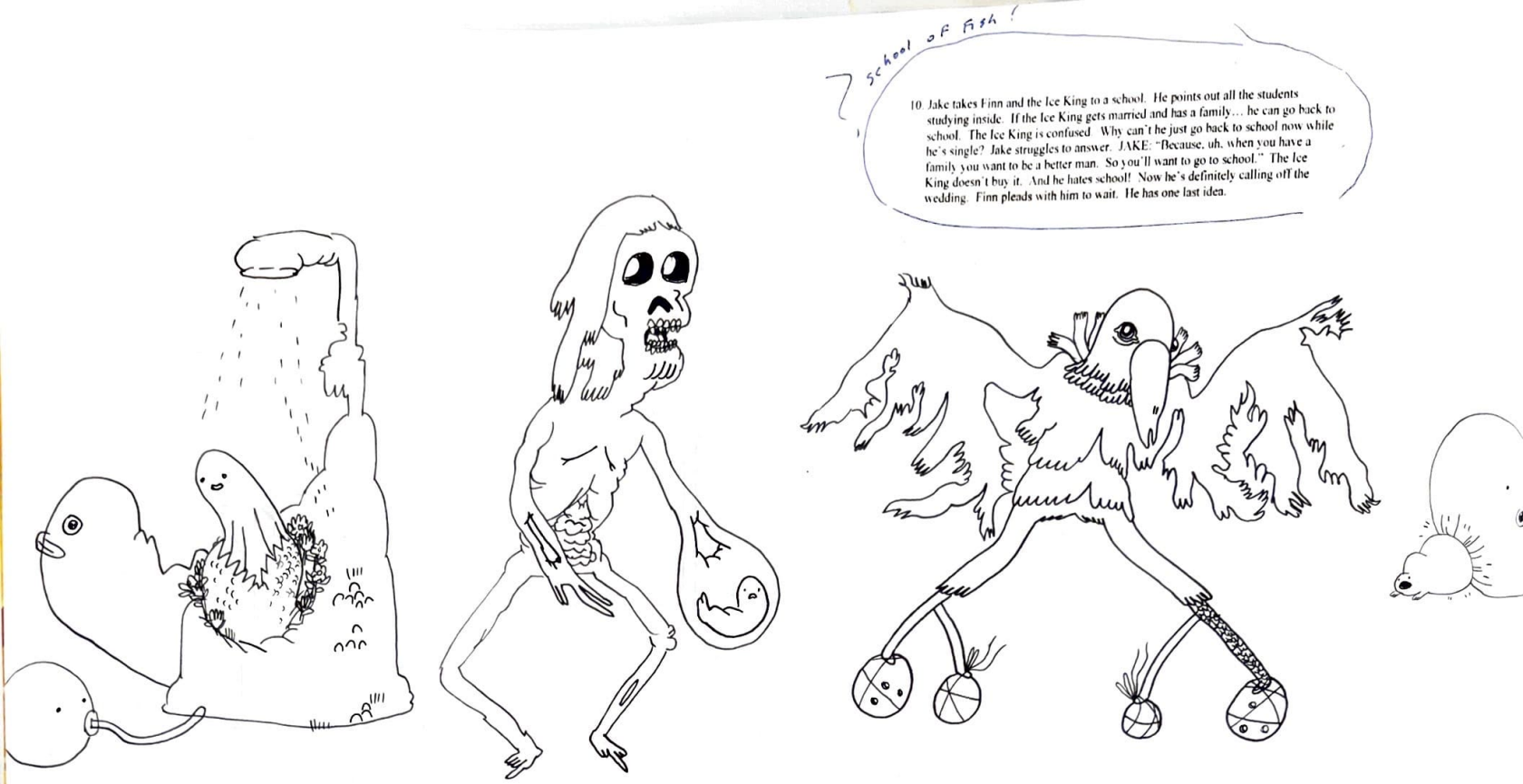
"When I was a kid I cared about cartoon and comics characters. On *The Simpsons*, when Lisa was in love with her substitute teacher and he had to leave town for good on that train, I cared about how

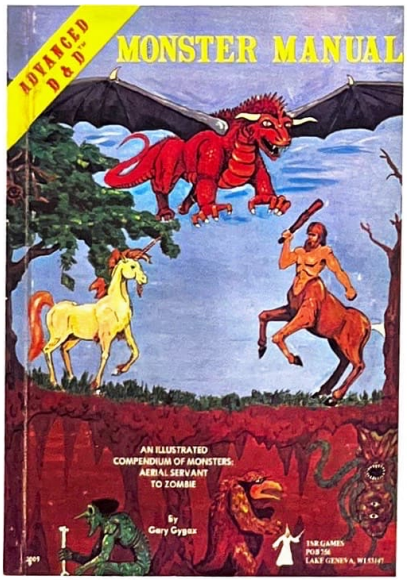
Opposite: Pen Ward's first drawings of Finn ("Pen") and Jake, plus Battle Pig.

Left: Pen at an animation desk, drawn by Pen.

Below: Early series-development sketchbook page revealing important unanswered questions to be explored, by storyboard artist and co-executive producer Adam Muto.





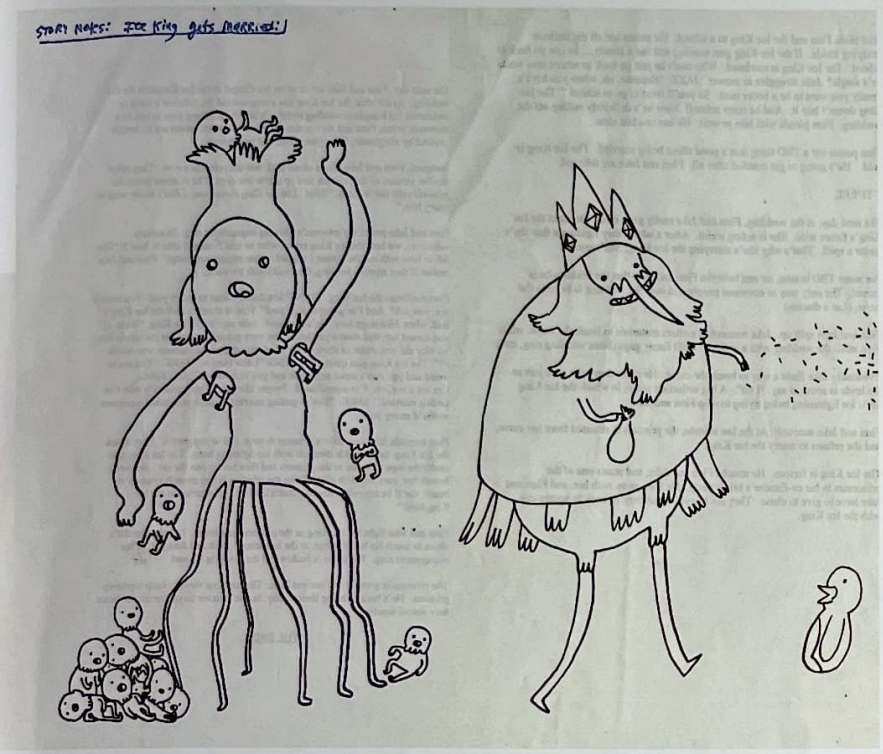


she felt. On *Doug*, I empathized with Doug Funnie whenever he got nervous around Patti Mayonnaise. Even *Beavis and Butt-Head* and *Ren & Stimpy* had real moments that affected me. When Butt-Head was choking on that chicken, it felt real, not cartoony . . . it was intense, but still funny. I'm into these kinds of feelings and ideas."

Pen would spend hours looking at pages of comic-book heroes while imagining what it'd be like to have their powers and how he'd use them. "Wolverine and all of those superhero characters appealed to me because they were full of angst."

An obscure cartoon image that stuck in Pen's memory was an anthropomorphic inkblot in Ralph Bakshi's 1992 film *Cool World*. Starring Kim Basinger as a cartoon femme fatale desperate to become real and interact with humans, this film had the PG-13 sensibilities that roused young imaginations. During the climactic scene, Basinger opens a portal to the cartoon world with the "spike of power," releasing undulating ribbons and blobs of inky energy with screaming faces. "This one blot, it had a face that opened its mouth and kept opening its mouth until the lips wrapped around its entire face . . . inverting the face and revealing a new face . . . it blew my brains out. It left me wondering how that creature worked." Though on-screen only for a few seconds, this imagery fascinated Pen. The surreal possibilities of expressive cartoon animation were not lost on him, and—in this film's context—he saw that they could even be "a serious thing, and part of a serious world."

In junior high school, the role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons was a sandbox in which Pen and friends could create imaginative stories. Illustrated dungeon guides provided information about scads of wild fantasy creatures—orcs, chimeras, carrion crawlers, dryads, dragons, cloud giants, flesh golems, were bears, ochre jellies, shriekers, and shambling mounds, among others. Improvised adventure stories were collaboratively written as they were played.



Left: Six drawings by Pen titled "Story Notes: Ice King Gets Married" from an early story meeting during the series's production. These drawings in particular show off the unique combination of grotesque and inventive creature designs, humor, and inherent cuteness that comes naturally to Pen's cartooning.

Opposite bottom: The cover of a Dungeons & Dragons *Monster Manual*, complete with wild, lurid black-and-white illustrations and descriptions of hundreds of fantasy creatures–an influential part of Pen's adolescence.

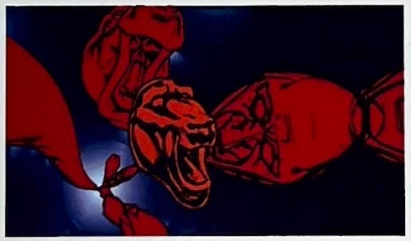
Right: Pen's mom, Bettie, perhaps Pen's greatest influence, on a pedestal, drawn by Pen.

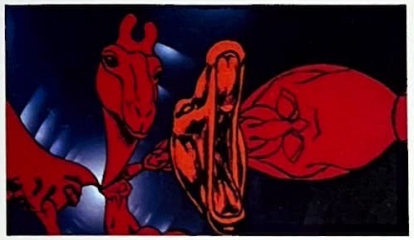
Below top: Frames from the specific scene in Ralph Bakshi's 1992 film, *Cool World*, that etched itself into Pen's memory, with animation by Evan Gwynne.



During his high school years, Pen attended an animation summer camp on the CalArts campus: the California State Summer School for the Arts. In this competitive program for highly motivated students, Pen found a mentor in instructor and animator Cornelius "Corny" Cole. Corny screened his film *Heaven and Hell*, a tour de force of intricate drawings in constant movement depicting dark, violent acts from prehistory through atomic carnage. For Pen, the film became a pillar of animated achievement that he would rewatch year after year. "It's an awesome and overwhelming film. It pushed me forward and inspired me. It was the first film that really blew my mind open. When I saw it in high school I cried because his drawings are so beautiful and they're flashing by you at something like eight frames per second. I love Corny; he's still a role model and mentor for me. I tried making artful life-drawing films in college, but I couldn't pull it off. I was better at making funny nonsense. I remember Corny laughing at my

(Continued on page 23)







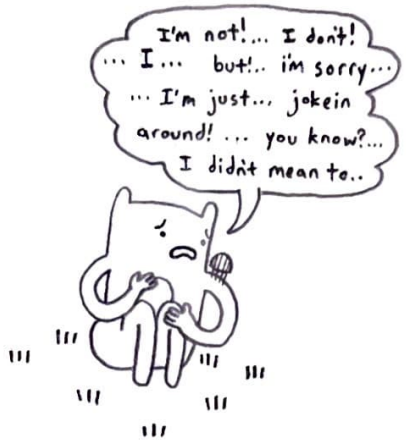




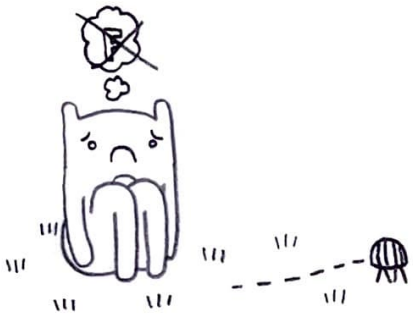
Left: Frames from Pen's mentor Cornelius "Corny" Cole's powerful and masterfully drawn film *Heaven and Hell*.

BUENO THE BEAR

This spread: Example drawings from Pen's pre–*Adventure Time* comic strip *Bueno the Bear*. Design-wise, Bueno appears to be a distant ancestor of Finn's.















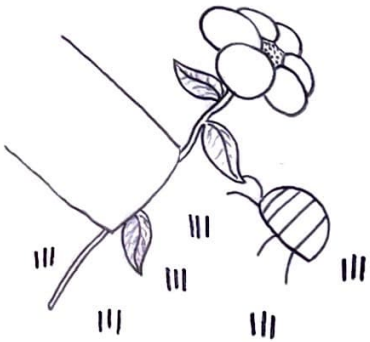


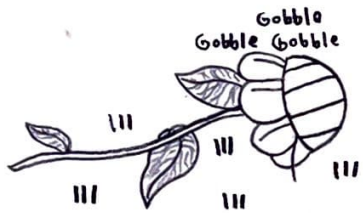
















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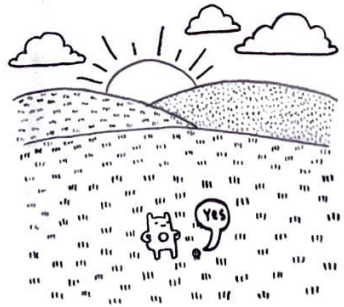
Penelope Piddle Bug



What If I Farted FLOWERS?

by Pendleton Ward





www.BUENOTHEBEAR.com





This page: A collection of mostly bug, bird, and old-lady drawings by Pen that designer Phil Rynda had as part of his "Pen reference folder," which was used to analyze and understand Pen's cartooning. These drawings were from development of a pre–*Adventure Time* feature film that was never completed, *The Awesome Detectives*. The film was to be a collaborative project by Neil Graf, Alex Hirsch, Somvilay Xayaphone, Pat McHale, Chad Coyle, Robertryan Cory, Nick Jeong, Nicole Mitchell, Jesus Chambrot, and Pen.

(Continued from page 17)
midresidence review when I screened my first-year film about a bear shaking its butt all over the place."

As they became increasingly available in the United States on home-video formats and occasionally in theaters through the late 1990s, Pen found the films of Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki and his Studio Ghibli to be a storytelling revelation. The pacing in films like *My Neighbor Totoro* had a quiet, relaxed feeling that occasionally allowed for the animated characters to just *exist*, spend time in the fantasy world on-screen, or laugh, run around, and explore without constant singing, screaming, or plot-advancing dialogue. "I was a freshman in college when I saw *My Neighbor Totoro* for the first time. I watched it dubbed in Korean without English subtitles . . . on a little pencil-test station monitor. Man, you can't crush *Totoro*, man. I mean, it's the best. No one can make anything better than *Totoro*."

The foundation for the cartoon universe of Ooo was already being laid inside Pen's mind, including its physicality, personalities, and magic.



After high school, Pen studied at the CalArts Character Animation program in Valencia, California, and graduated in 2005 along with future *Regular Show* creator J. G. Quintel and future *Adventure Time* artists Pat McHale and Somvilay Xayaphone. At the screening of Pen's final film at the CalArts Producers' Show, Eric Homan, a producer from Frederator Studios, was in the audience. He invited Pen to pitch a cartoon idea to Frederator.

Eric Homan: I approached Pen for three reasons. First, his work was clearly a favorite among his classmates. When your peers are cheering you and your work, that's pretty indicative of something special. Second, Pen had come highly recommended to me by Alex Kirwan. Alex was, at that time, art director on our production of *My Life as a Teenage Robot*, as well as a CalArts instructor. I valued Alex's insight—and still do. Finally, I really enjoyed the three films I had seen of Pen's. Every time I saw one, I didn't want it to end.

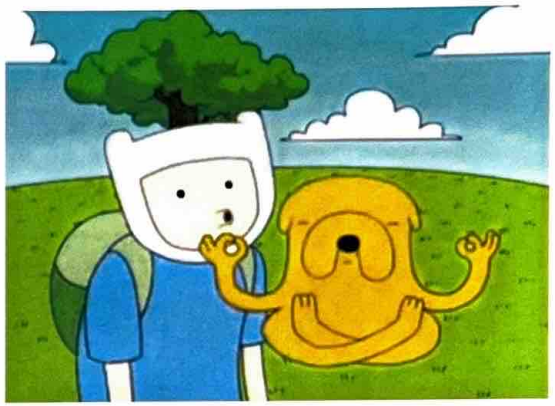
Pen took the opportunity. Fred Seibert's production company, Frederator, was searching for new shorts to produce to be part of an anthology series, *Random! Cartoons*, which would air on Nickelodeon, and possibly serve to launch new shows. Pen showed up to the pitch carrying his guitar.

Pen Ward: I came in with this goofy little idea that I had drawn up in my sketchbook. I didn't know what a professional storyboard was supposed to look like, or how to draw one. I did the best that I could. I wrote a song about it that I sang at the meeting, and that song is the opening credit song that ended up on the beginning of the pilot and series.

Eric Homan: Generally, you roll your eyes when someone brings any sort of prop, including musical instruments, as they tend to hurt a pitch. However, the pitch went great, of course. It was clear Pen had an original vision.

The Frederator development team at Nickelodeon's Burbank studios invited Pen to return and pitch again the following week when NYC-based Fred Seibert was in town. After the second pitch, however, Frederator's response was not unanimous. In a post-pitch powwow, Eric Homan and *Random! Cartoons* producer Kevin Kolde needed to convince a skeptical Fred Seibert that Pen's idea could work. Fred was concerned that Pen wasn't interested in making commercially viable cartoon entertainment and that he had just pitched an "art film." Eric reminded Fred that he had laughed during the meeting at Pen's pitch—and that he had used his real laugh, not the fake one. Fred was finally convinced, and Pen had a short to make.

Adventure Time the short was produced with Pen filling as many roles as possible, trying to manage the whirlwind experience of working with a team while keeping the short true to his original vision. With old college friends as roommates and collaborators, Pen had help and advice on hand at all times. Future *Adventure Time* storyboard artist and co-executive producer Adam Muto designed the Abraham Lincoln on Mars sequence and animated various cycles and



Above: A still from the original *Adventure Time* short featuring proto-Finn and Jake. In the short, Finn was named "Pen," and Jake could levitate and connect to the Internet with his mind. The cartoon was produced by Frederator for the *Random! Cartoons* anthology show on Nickelodeon.

Below: The *Adventure Time* opening credits–song lyrics that Pen had also performed in the original pitch meeting.

Adventure Time,
C'mon grab your friends,
We'll go to very
Distant lands
With Jake the Dog and
Finn the Human
The fun will never end
It's Adventure Time!





This page: *Adventure Time* pilot-era comics and drawings by Pen.

Opposite left: Pen at the first *Adventure Time* voice-recording session, November 4, 2005.



pose tests. Future *Adventure Time* storyboard artist and creative director Pat McHale consulted along the way. His contributions included the catchphrase exclamations "Rhombus!" and "Oxymoron." The look of this prototype short was bright colors and simple backgrounds, with a "preschool vibe," as Pen has described it, but the backbone of the series was already there: the friendship between a boy and a dog.

The short's completion on April 24, 2006, started Nickelodeon's eighteen-month option window to choose whether to put the show into series development. But the finished short wasn't headed for repeated play on television screens just yet. The *Adventure Time* episode of *Random! Cartoons* would not air until late 2008, in fact.

Eric Homan: In late 2006, *Adventure Time* was nominated for an Annie Award for Best Animated Short Subject. The problem was that Annie-voting members of the International Animated Film Society hadn't seen the unaired cartoon. The idea of uploading the short to the Internet wouldn't work, however, since Screen Actors Guild union rules disallowed any digital distribution of the short without its airing on television first. The solution was to air *Adventure Time* quietly overnight on Nick's sister outlet, the Nicktoons network, allowing us to put the short online.

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, January 11, 2007, Nicktoons network slipped *Adventure Time* on air in accordance with SAG's requirements.



Frederator then posted the cartoon on Google Video in short order. Later that night, there was an audience-packed *Random! Cartoons* screening at Nick's Burbank studio featuring ten cartoons, including *Adventure Time*.

The following morning, Jerry Beck wrote a brief post on the short and embedded the film on the industry news and commentary website *Cartoon Brew*. Frederator also posted the Google Video on its own blog. By the next day the video had more than 10,000 views. In quick succession, new fans placed several versions of the film on YouTube. By Sunday, the Google Video upload had more than 123,000 views, while the most dominant upload of the short on YouTube was ranked the Top Favorite in Arts & Animation, and number six in Top Favorites (All). By that Monday—within five days of the short hitting the Internet—a designer/illustrator in Massachusetts had created the first known *Adventure Time* fan website. The following Sunday, the short had another 75,000 views on YouTube in addition to 225,000 views on Google Video. By then, the web was littered with fan art, most notably on DeviantArt.

The shareable, on-demand nature of copies of the short online provided an important conduit to reach new fans. The short's professional production stood out among the largely amateur pool of cartoons freely available online. But it was the fresh direction and characters that appealed to people.

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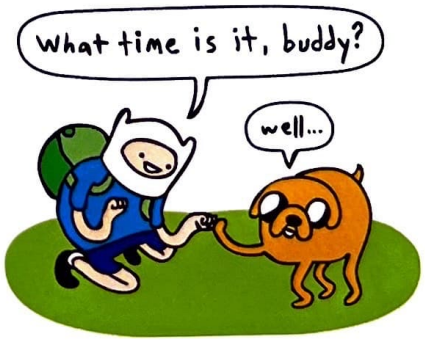
SERIES PITCH BIBLE



wwwWWWWWHHUUUU!?

Adventure Time is about two close friends: Jake, a wise old dog with a big kind heart, and Finn, a silly kid who wants more than anything else to become a great hero.

These two dudes are all they have in the ways of family. They depend and lean on each other through thick and thin, they trust one another with secrets and look to each other for advice when problems get out of hand. More important than any of that, Finn and Jake crack each other up by acting like idiots and telling ridiculous jokes as they traverse their way across a massive and treacherous island seeking heart-pounding adventure to pass the time.



Right: The first two pages of the *Adventure Time* series pitch bible as presented to Cartoon Network.

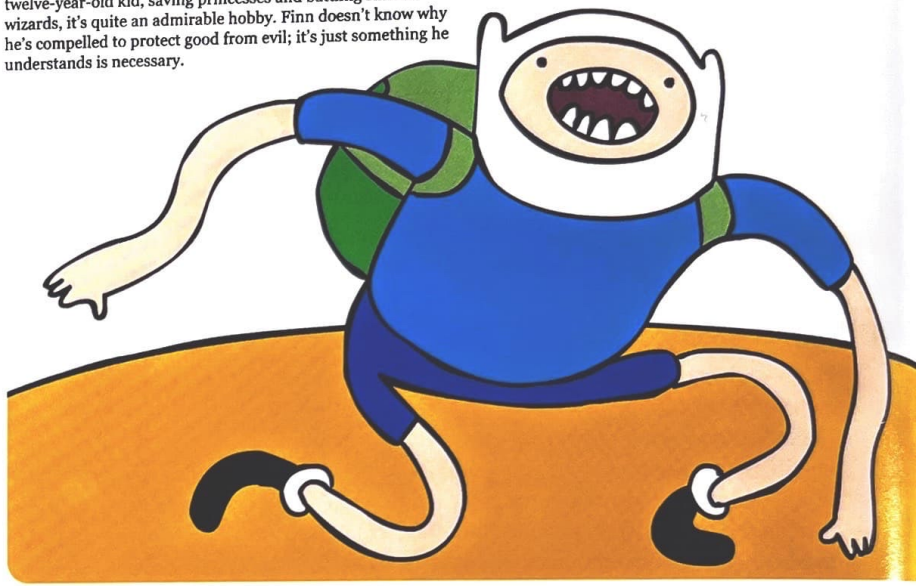
SERIES PITCH BIBLE



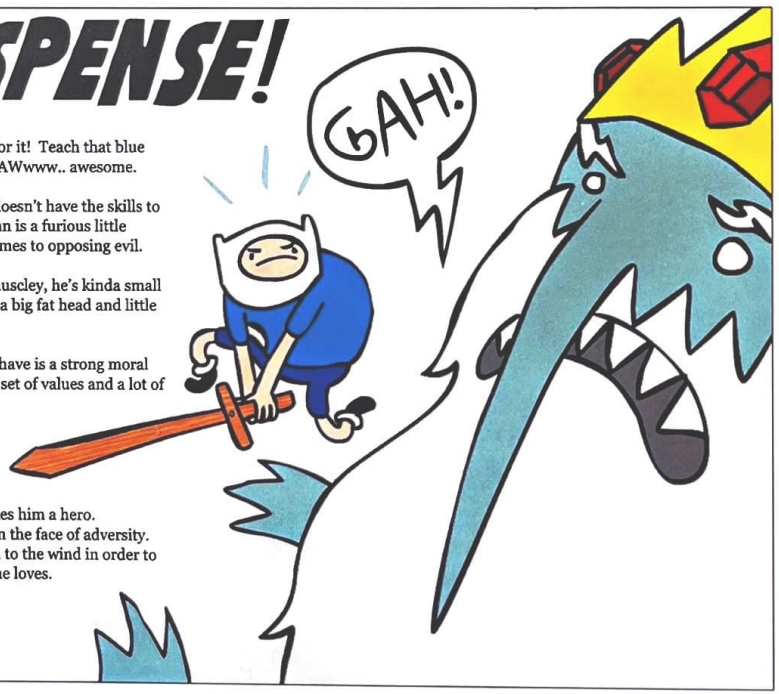
FINN THE HUMAN BOY

At first glance you probably wouldn't know it, but Finn is a mighty hero. It's true, he's passionate about heroism. For a twelve-year-old kid, saving princesses and battling sinister wizards, it's quite an admirable hobby. Finn doesn't know why he's compelled to protect good from evil; it's just something he understands is necessary.

It could be in his blood, maybe his parents were noble do-gooders like him. Maybe they're royal cosmic cowboys fighting intergalactic outlaws in space, maybe they're the presidents of righteous Dinosaur Knights. Finn doesn't know his own mysterious origin.



SUSPENSE!



Yeah dude! Go for it! Teach that blue patoot a lesson!! AWwww.. awesome.

Even though he doesn't have the skills to win the battle, Finn is a furious little booger when it comes to opposing evil.

Finn isn't very muscley, he's kinda small and noodley with a big fat head and little feet.

What Finn does have is a strong moral backbone, a clear set of values and a lot of nerve!

That's what makes him a hero. Standing strong in the face of adversity. Throwing caution to the wind in order to protect the ones he loves.

A SIMPLE LITTLE GOOFBALL

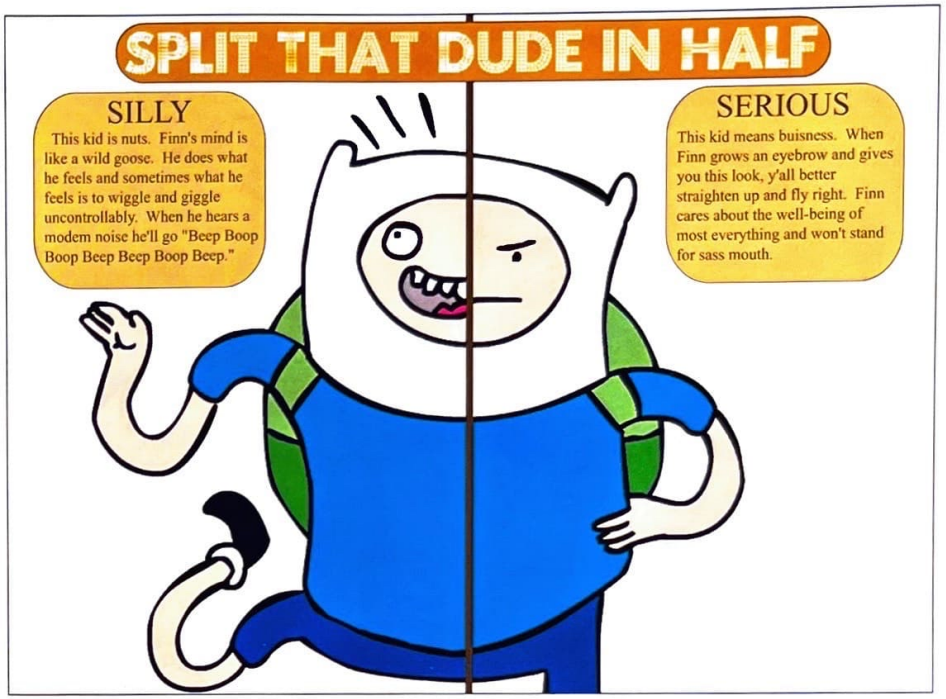


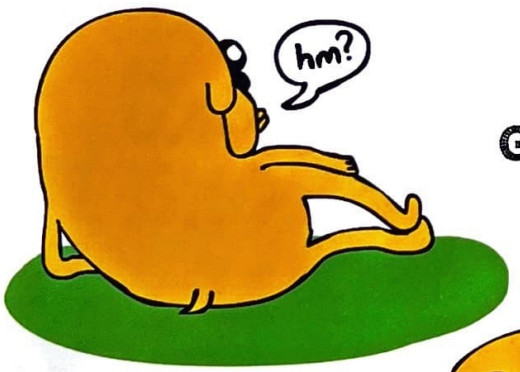
Finn takes pleasure in all the standard kid business like making up songs and crashing monster dance parties. And when evil isn't running amok? Finn is happy to spend those carefree moments jumping on rocks, rolling around in the grass or exploring his favorite adventure spots.

And when Finn isn't being a NUT or performing acts of HEROISM, he takes the time to sit on his rump and appreciate the sublimeness of nature. Simple things like a starry sky. Jake Points out the great heroes of the past immortalized as constellations. Finn can stargaze for hours, imagining his own exploits painted across the sky.



SPLIT THAT DUDE IN HALF





LADIES AND GENTLEMEN



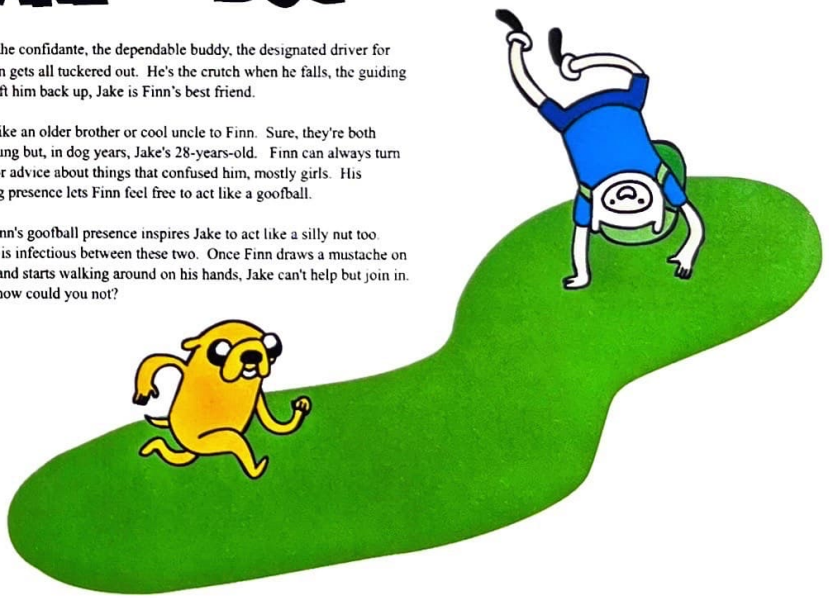
JAKE THE DOG

JAKE THE DOG

Jake is the confidante, the dependable buddy, the designated driver for when Finn gets all tuckered out. He's the crutch when he falls, the guiding hand to lift him back up, Jake is Finn's best friend.

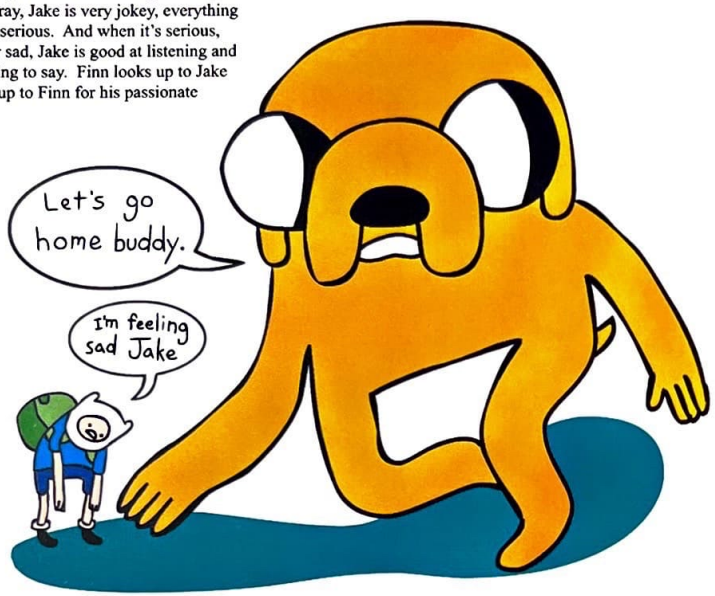
Jake is like an older brother or cool uncle to Finn. Sure, they're both pretty young but, in dog years, Jake's 28-years-old. Finn can always turn to Jake for advice about things that confused him, mostly girls. His reassuring presence lets Finn feel free to act like a goofball.

And Finn's goofball presence inspires Jake to act like a silly nut too. Sillyness is infectious between these two. Once Finn draws a mustache on his back and starts walking around on his hands, Jake can't help but join in. I mean.. how could you not?



SERIES PITCH BIBLE

Jake has a wise but playful manner about him. His relationship with Finn is similar to Bill Murray's character relating to Rudy in the movie Meatballs. Like Murray, Jake is very jokey, everything can be poked fun at until it gets serious. And when it's serious, like when Finn in feeling low or sad, Jake is good at listening and knowing the most thoughtful thing to say. Finn looks up to Jake in this way. In turn, Jake looks up to Finn for his passionate do-gooding.



Jake's great passion is music. He's in a viola band with his girlfriend Lady the Rainicorn. They practice every Sunday afternoon in Princess Bubblegum's garage (unless an adventure is underway). Sometimes he'll improvise songs on the spot, even during action intense escapades. At times he can be so taken by his own humming that his mind will wander and won't be able to hear anything but the sweet music in his head. Finn just has to say the word, though, and Jake gets back to action. That word is "ADVENTURE!"



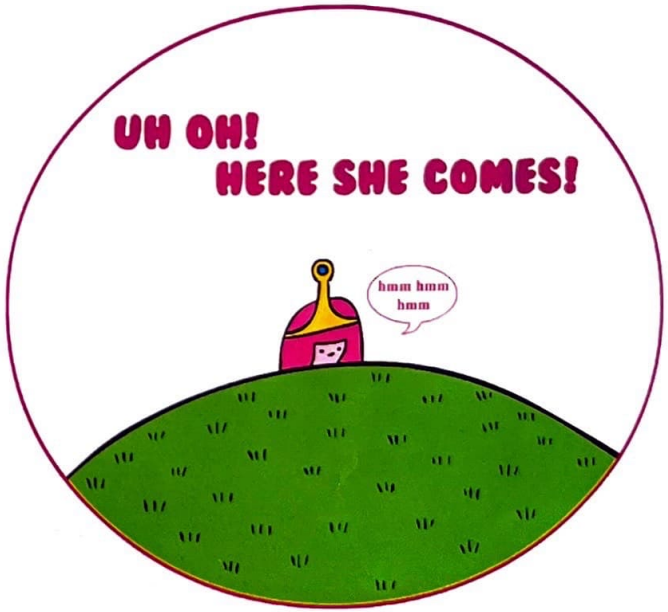
Finn and Jake moments







Jake uses his powers to create a blanket with his ear.



it's

PRINCESS BUBBLEGUM



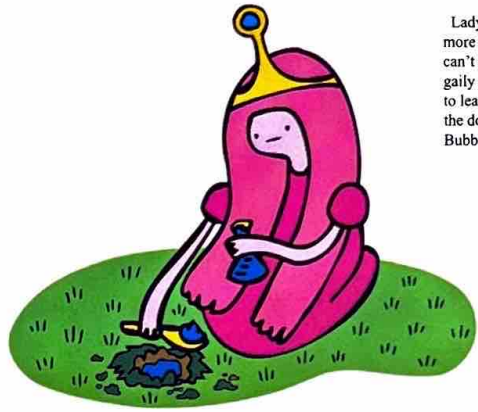
and

Lady the Rainicorn

As a millionaire nerd enthusiast, Princess Bubblegum immerses herself in every branch of geekdom from rocket science to turtle farming. Her immense knowledge on all things and vigilant dedication to the many fields of science and mathematics, provide an endless supply of interesting projects for Finn and Jake to get excited about.

Here she is collecting rare soil samples of crying baby dirt for her experiments on the sociology of sentient earth. (she just sticks a bunch of wuss dirt in a jar with bully dirt and shakes them together.. eats a sandwich and watches them fight.)





Lady the Rainicorn is as loyal as she is majestic. Mentally, she is more of a puppy-dog than Jake ever was. When she wakes up and can't see Princess Bubblegum, she'll dash around the castle grounds gaily searching for her mistress. And when Princess Bubblegum has to leave Lady at home, so she can go run errands, Lady scratches at the door and screams her magical cooing language until Princess Bubblegum returns.

As simple minded as Lady is, she's still capable of picking up the viola and throwing down a classical sonata. Her love of music makes her and Jake a perfect match. On Sunday afternoons Jake and Lady have band practice in Princess Bubblegum's garage. The play a fusion of classical and bluegrass. Their band is called

The Angelcakes.



it's

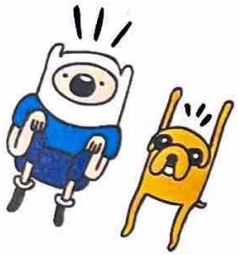
Marceline the Vampire Queen



SERIES PITCH BIBLE

Marceline is a wild rocker girl. She's lived for centuries and has developed a total disregard for social conventions. For Finn, Marceline embodies the allure of a daredevil. She's fearless in her actions and words, and generally throws life to the wind. .. Or rather, she throws un-life to the wind, Marceline is a Vampiress.

Finn does NOT approve of Marceline's mischievous prankster ways, but he's totally captivated by her butt-kicking appeal. Her cool nerve and aloof jokes about how tubby the Ice King is getting, really strike a chord with Finn's childishness. Finn's heart shrinks a little whenever Marceline talks smack, but he still gets giddy and let's loose a premature teenage bellowing chuckle/scoff.





A masterful fiend of amplified instruments, Marceline is unrestrained super stardom. Marceline spent a few hundred years practicing horns and stringed instruments. What she loves most is setting up her amps and guitar at the edge of the great canyons in the mountains, dangling her feet off the edge and listening to her ballads echo for miles around her.

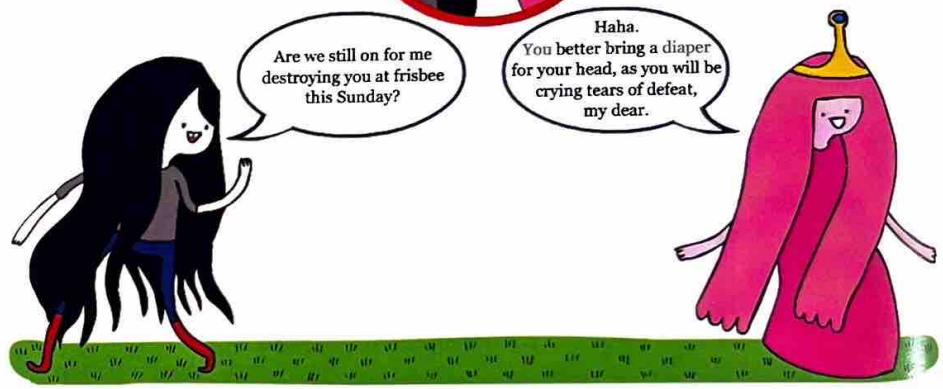
When Marceline has amplifiers strapped to her boots and belt, stand back cause she will actually blow your ear drums out (she is very inconsiderate and cool like this).

MARCELINE AND BETTIE ARE FRIENDLY RIVALS AT ALMOST EVERYTHING.

Princess Bubblegum shows off her immense wealth and responsibility and Marceline flaunts her freedom and recklessness. They usually blow off this sibling style steam with ridiculous sports and games like Frisbee golf or who can poke a giant six-toed bee's bottom without being eaten.



Sometimes Finn gets trapped in these contests and has to deal with calming down his friends while trying to understand what their deal is. Occasionally Finn becomes the target in these rivalries; for instance: who can kiss Finn on the cheek the most sort of thing... *it's terribly embarrassing for everyone.*



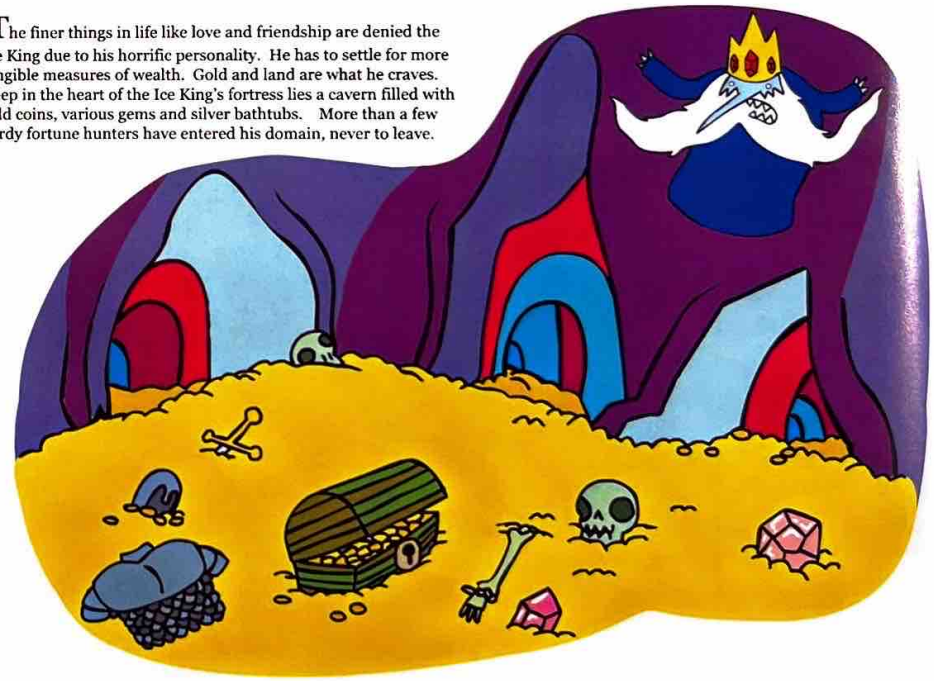
THE ICE KING

He's a bad egg, this guy. Armed with a magical crown and a frozen heart, The Ice King is a threat to everyone who crosses him and even himself. Ambitious. Ruthless. An incredible dork. The Ice King is a 1000-year-old socially inept patoot who will stop at nothing to be accepted as the cool potential boyfriend to an unlucky Princess or Ice Lady.

The Ice King has power over all things chilly. With his ice magic he can turn snow balls into icy spikes, mold monsters out of refrigerator frost and even turn your dog's nose against you. But his magic is always used for his own selfish aims. He likes to build giant ice monuments of himself in heroic (or sometimes sexy) poses and then cry as they melt. The Ice King has MAJOR ISSUES.



The finer things in life like love and friendship are denied the Ice King due to his horrific personality. He has to settle for more tangible measures of wealth. Gold and land are what he craves. Deep in the heart of the Ice King's fortress lies a cavern filled with gold coins, various gems and silver bathtubs. More than a few hardy fortune hunters have entered his domain, never to leave.



The Ice King hates Finn and Jake. He hates their care-free rocken-out attitudes so much that he'll spend entire afternoons just cursing them and conjuring monsters to destroy them! But secretly... The Ice King is jealous of how suave and confident Finn and Jake are. And it's quite apparent that (beneath all of his cold disdain) he is trying to be cool like Finn and Jake. When he is spying on the dudes from behind bushes he'll try to emulate how they walk and say phrases like "totally mathematical" and "fantastic rhombus ride." But when he inevitably fails at being cool, the Ice King flies off the handle and attacks Finn and Jake with frozen lightning bolts! Sheesh! Finn and Jake need to kick that guy's butt or have a sit down heart-to-heart with him or something.



The Ice Mountains are the Ice King's own vast deathtrap. He's sculpted the mountains into a jagged labyrinth of crevasses and pitfalls. The country is populated with terrible monsters that are kept fed with reckless intruders and tap dancing penguins. Surrounded by blasted wasteland, The Ice King rules on high from his wint'ry fortress. His personal life might be a mess but his goals are practical. Conquer neighboring kingdoms, expand his ice fields and secure a wife by any means necessary. He's an icy thorn in the side of the citizens of Ooo.

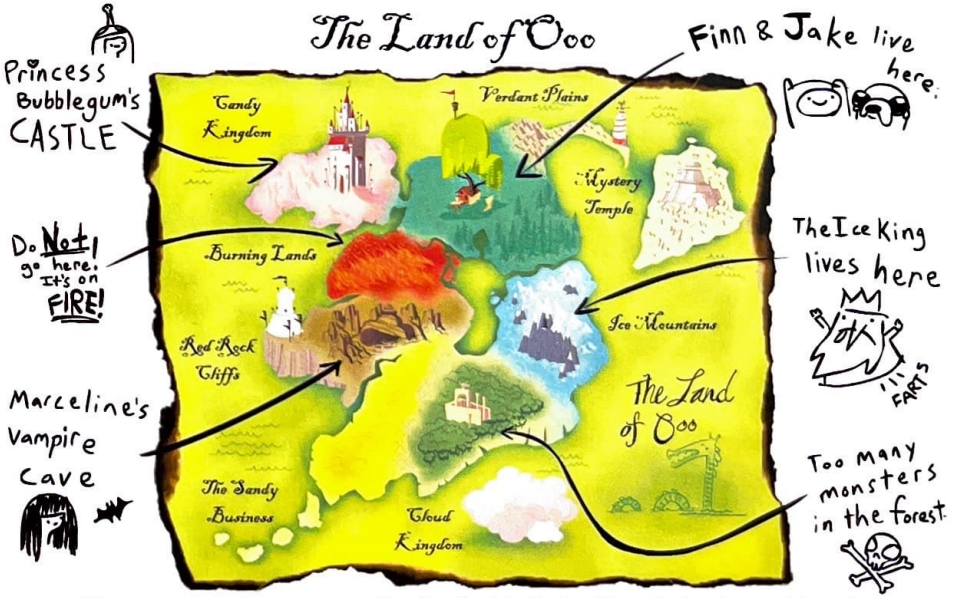




THE LICH KING IS NOT FUNNY

The Lich King embodies absolute evil. He doesn't give long monologues about how he's going to rule the world, or waste time by sending out evil henchmen. When he wants something destroyed he just raises a legion of undead knights, marches in and obliterates everything in his path. Dealing with the Lich King is serious and dangerous business. It requires exceptional stealth and strategy, and knowing Finn and Jake, they'll probably just run up to him screaming battle cries.

Luckily the Lich King was magically sealed away in his castle long ago. Still though, he's a powerful and evil force that's waiting patiently for someone curious enough to enter his domain and accidentally unlock his magical chains.

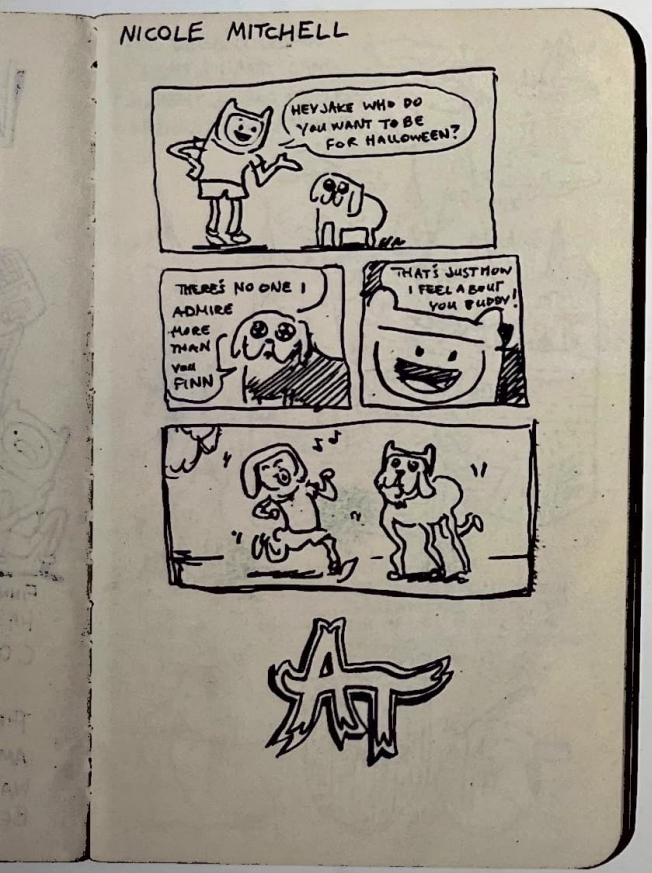


Like some cosmic grandmamma wove a patchwork continent together from the most untamed scraps of the world, the land of Ooo is made of seven wildly different terrains placed side by side. The fiery wastelands rage violently next to miles of tranquil verdant field, the swamps touch mountains touch forests touch ice caps touch a cute little candy peninsula on this primitive melting-pot of earth. All of these environments make this world RIPE for adventure!

Below: Page from creative and supervising director and storyboard artist Adam Muto's sketchbook from early in the series's production at Cartoon Network. The comic featuring Finn and Jake is by Nicole Mitchell.

Right: Drawing from supervising director and storyboard artist Elizabeth Ito's sketchbook, depicting Pen's answer to an audience member's question at a convention panel discussion.





(Continued from page 25)

Despite the unusual, burgeoning fan-base for this single cartoon short, Nickelodeon executives were ultimately not convinced that *Adventure Time* was a bet they were willing to make.

By the end of October 2007, it was apparent that the network was passing on an *Adventure Time* series. When Nickelodeon's rights to option the show expired at the end of that month, Frederator picked up the option to shop it elsewhere.

In the meantime, Thurop Van Orman's Cartoon Network series *The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack* had become Pen's new cartoon home. Pen refined his storytelling chops as part of the crew that wrote and illustrated the storyboards. The experience primed Pen on many of the production specifics that he had lacked before, including absorbing every detail that he could about Thurop's storytelling and showrunning techniques. Also gaining experience on *Flapjack*'s crew were Pat McHale, Cole Sanchez, Kent Osborne, Somvilay Xayaphone, and other artists and writers who would later join the *Adventure Time* crew.

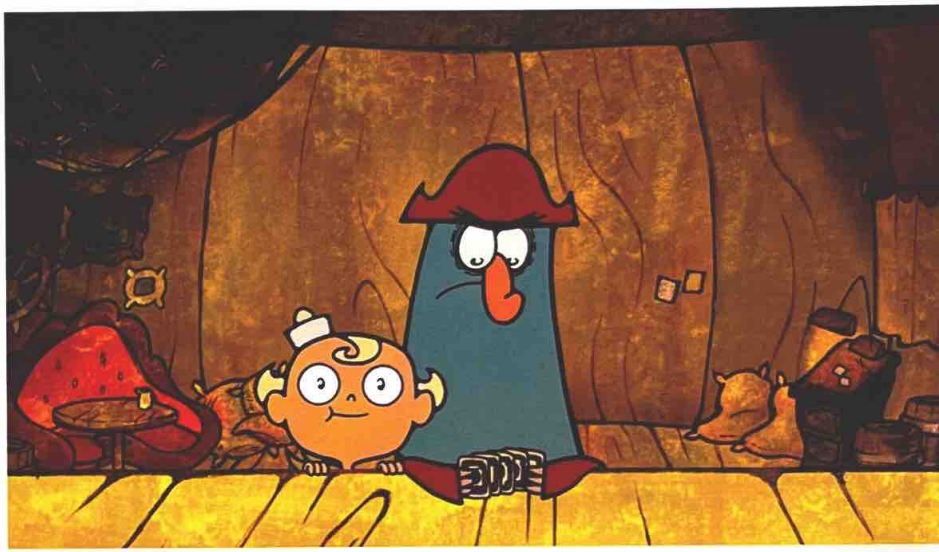
With the rights back in Frederator's pocket, it was time to pitch *Adventure Time* again. Cartoon Network was next.

Pat McHale: We revised the show bible [the document used during a pitch that describes the series's characters and world with sample designs and stories] slightly to make it a little clearer and better, and showed that to Cartoon Network, along with the original short. Fred also had a slideshow full of fan art and stuff, to show that there was already a cult following for the short.

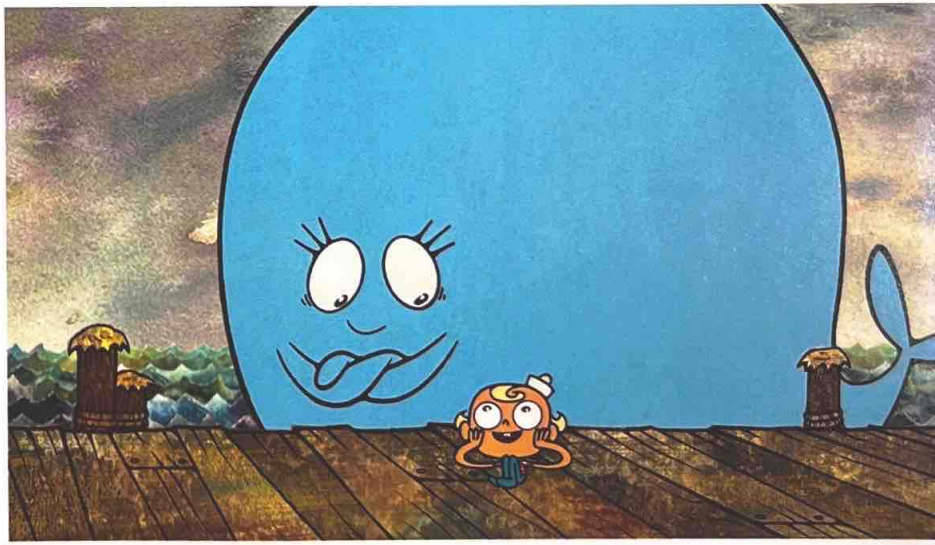
Rob Sorcher was part of the recent wave of management changes at Cartoon Network at the time. Newly installed as executive vice president and chief content officer, he looked to his previous experience as Cartoon Network's first general manager in the 1990s, during which the network found success developing ideas from independent-minded creators into offbeat shows like *Powerpuff Girls*, *Courage the Cowardly Dog*, and *Ed, Edd n Eddy*.

[EVP/Chief Content Officer, Cartoon Network] Rob Sorcher: One of the first meetings that I took was Fred Seibert. Fred came in and he said, "I want you to look at this cartoon." He had done his own shorts program with Nickelodeon, and he showed me *Adventure Time*. And I saw something there. I saw something that felt really indie, felt comic book–y, felt really new. I hadn't really seen that tone before. There's that moment in the short where Abraham Lincoln is on Mars. . . . I sensed the kind of dual-audience appeal that this thing had. It didn't look completely polished. I also thought that was a good quality about it.

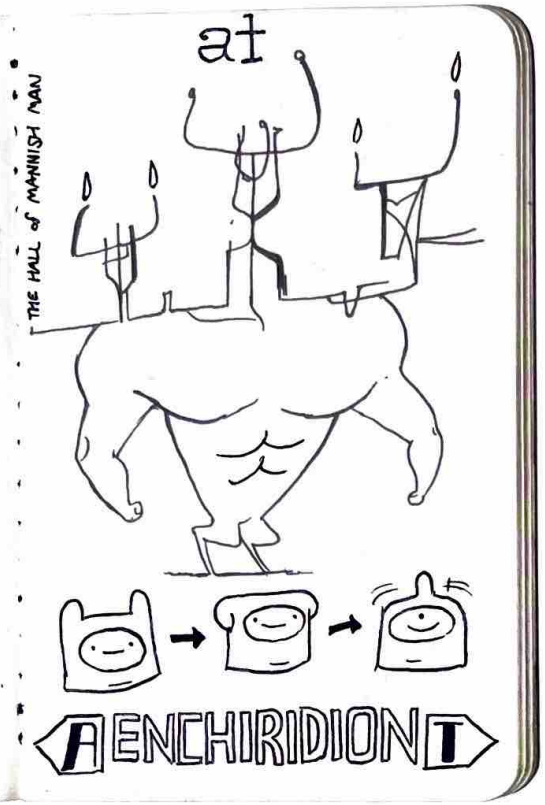


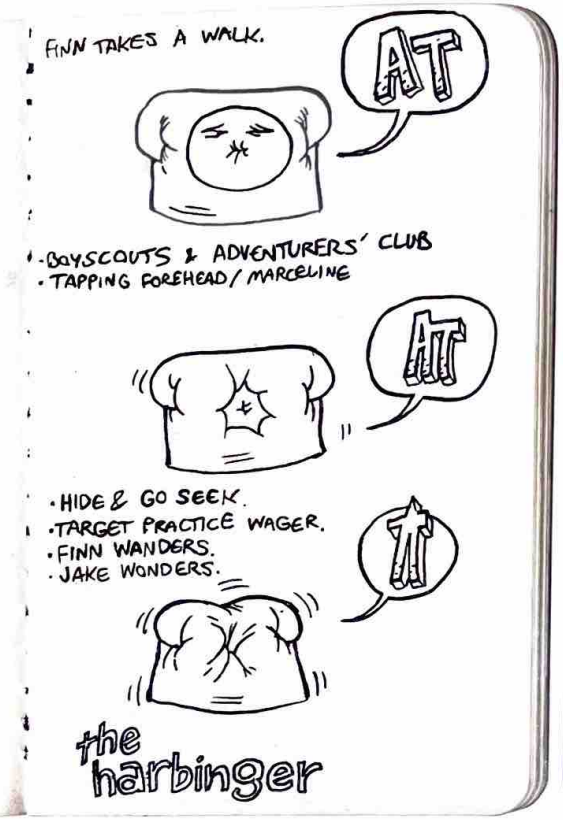






This page: Framegrabs from four of Pen's co-storyboarded episodes of Thurop Van Orman's Cartoon Network series *The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack*. Many future *Adventure Time* crew members worked on this series.







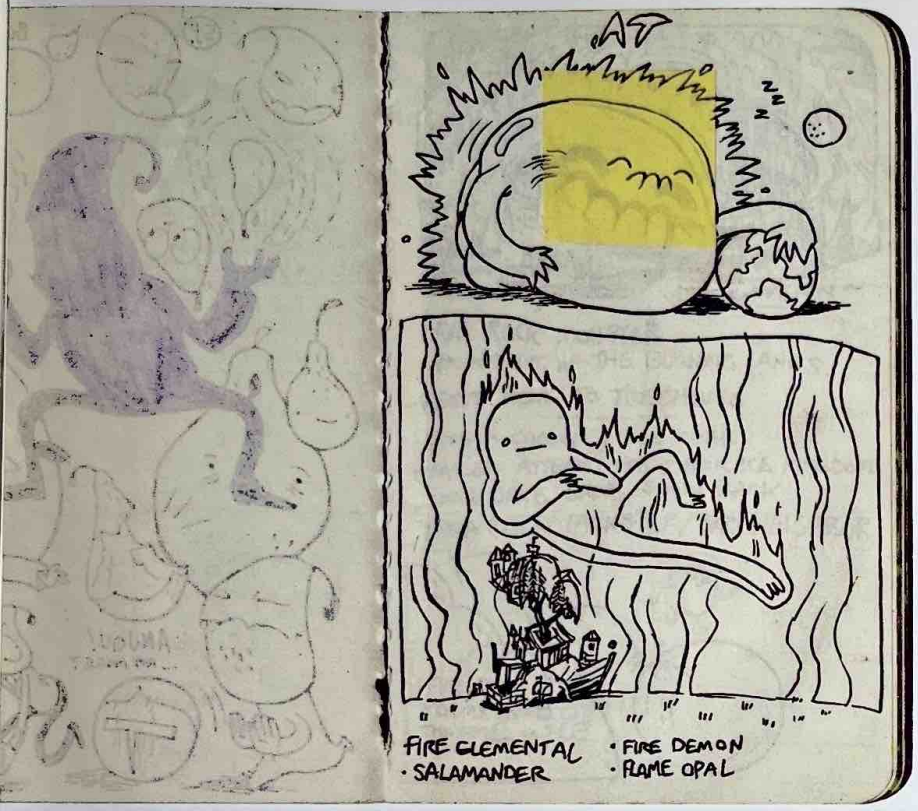
The pitch meeting went well, but a green light putting the show fully into production wasn't immediately forthcoming. Cartoon Network executives wanted to see a complete eleven-minute storyboard as a "proof of concept" that the short had potential to be expanded into a series. In the summer of 2008, Pen, Pat McHale, and Adam Muto were commissioned to create a storyboard for that next episode.

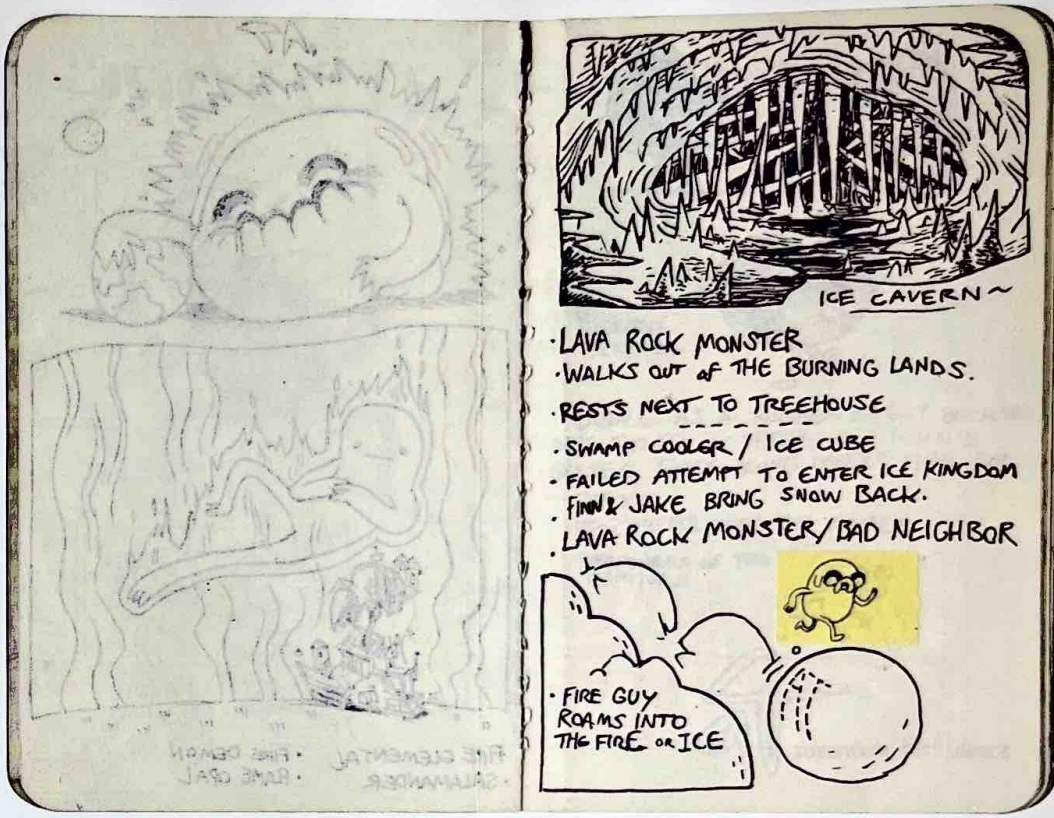
Adam Muto: The first storyboard written for the show was "The Enchiridion!" It went through multiple passes before it was approved, and a lot of sequences were revised and excised. It was basically a kitchen-sink episode crammed with all the things that the show was going to be about.

Pat McHale: They wanted us to re-create the same types of humor and action and everything that were in the original short, but . . . different. They weren't sure if it was a one-hit-wonder sort of thing. So we did it up, and pitched it. It went over really well! They were relieved that what was good about the first short could be translated into an eleven-minute episode.

Rob Sorcher: We made the deal with Fred, and it was a big risk to take, let me tell you, this thing was not fully realized at that point. It looked completely different, and we had to assemble a team around it in the studio here, and figure out how we're going to turn this into a series. We knew we had a really unique point of view and tone of voice inside of this with Pen, but we needed to build the machinery around it that could support an ongoing series.

The show was green-lit, meaning that Cartoon Network would produce and air an initial season of twenty-six eleven-minute episodes, to be aired in thirteen-episode blocks, with an option to order more later. Production began in earnest with the writing and storyboarding of new episodes.



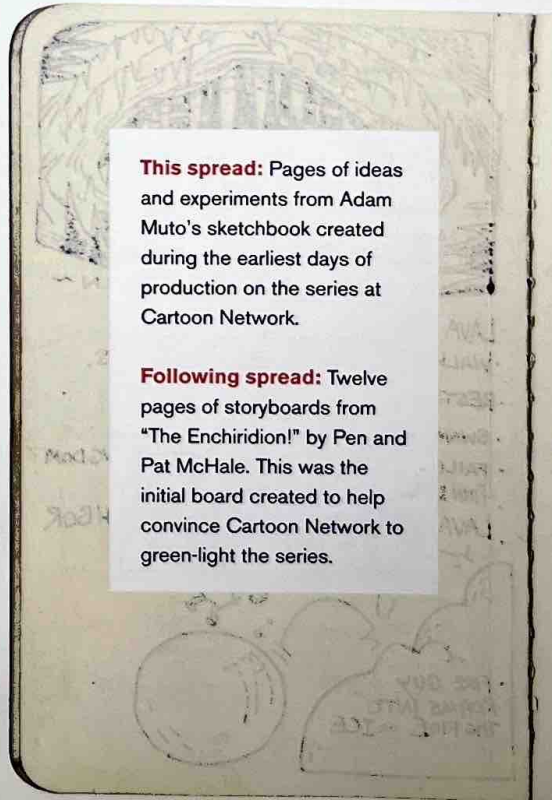


Pat McHale: We started writing new outlines and doing boards, and we got a lot of notes and concerns about everything. Cartoon Network was anxious to see another storyboard pitch, so we finally pitched "Brothers in Insomnia," an episode about Finn and Jake being unable to sleep due to trouble in a little Dew People society inside the base of their tree house. This was the first storyboard we pitched after the show got green-lit. It was a packed room with lots of Cartoon Network staff there to watch, and the pitch went really well. There was a lot of laughter and a lot of congratulations. And then . . . we got the network notes: Was it too long? Did it make sense? What was the story about? Instead of quelling their concerns about the show, it made them even more worried.

Cartoon Network management decided to hire some experienced help in several key positions to nudge the production toward smoother operation. Derek Drymon was brought on as an executive producer. Merriwether Williams was hired as story editor. Nick Jennings was hired as art director. All three were veterans of *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

[Executive producer] Derek Drymon: At the time I became executive producer on *Adventure Time* they had already done about eight or nine storyboards but were struggling to get anything approved. Everyone seemed frustrated that they hadn't quite nailed the charm and uniqueness of the original pilot. From what I could tell things had bogged down a bit from the combination of Pen and his crew producing a television series for the first time and *Adventure Time* being the first series green-lit by the new executive leadership. There was a lot of pressure/stress on both sides that the show was the best it could be. Previously I had been the creative director on *SpongeBob SquarePants* and had gone through some similar experiences in the period between the pilot and the first season.

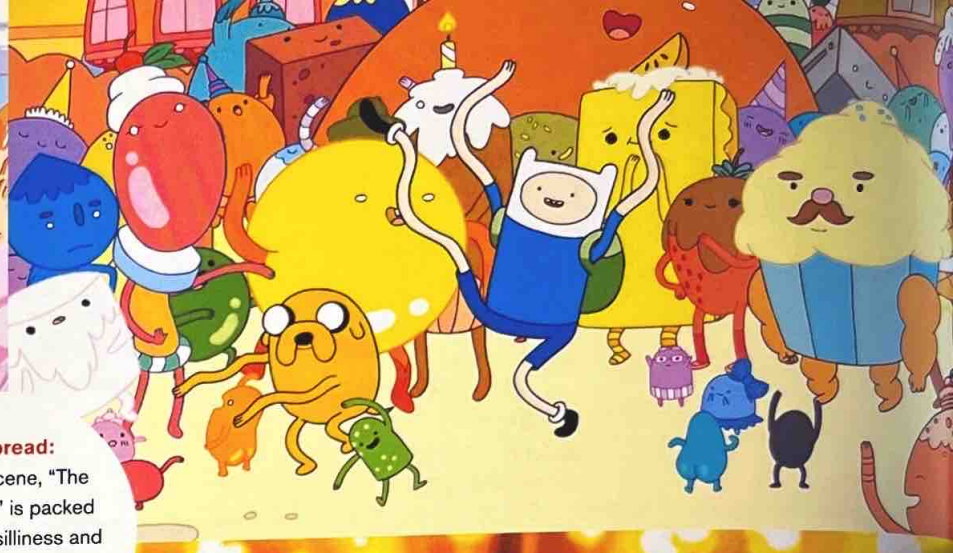
(Continued on page 40)



This spread: Pages of ideas and experiments from Adam Muto's sketchbook created during the earliest days of production on the series at Cartoon Network.

Following spread: Twelve pages of storyboards from "The Enchiridion!" by Pen and Pat McHale. This was the initial board created to help convince Cartoon Network to green-light the series.





This spread:
Scene to scene, "The Enchiridion!" is packed with offbeat silliness and adventure–the prototype episode of the series.









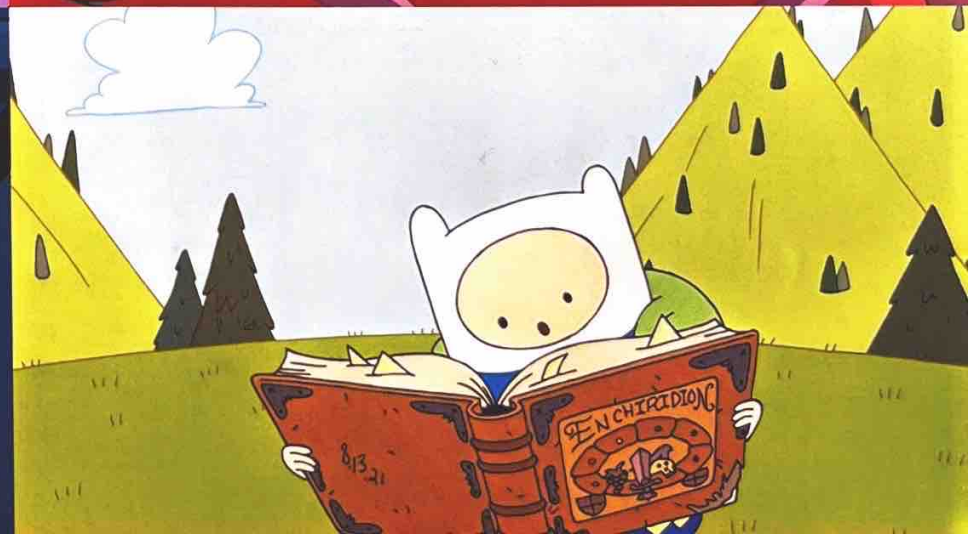




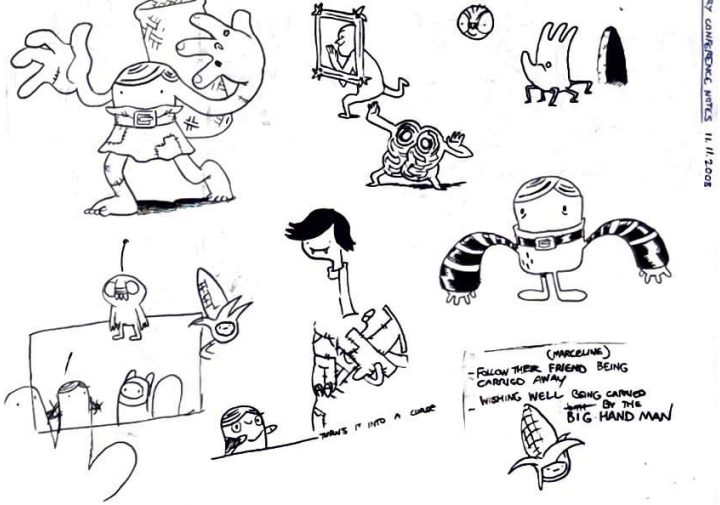







ENCHIRIDION
8/13/21





This spread: Story conference notes about "Brothers in Insomnia," the first episode to be developed after "The Enchiridion!," as well as additional episode ideas (opposite). This episode is one of several season one premises that ultimately did not get produced. Notes here are preliminarily titled both "Tree Story" and "Dew," with artwork by Pen, Adam Muto, Bert Youn, Pat McHale, and Kent Osborne.



(Continued from page 35)

[VP, Comedy Animation, Cartoon Network] Curtis Lelash: It was a time when we were looking more intensely at our shows, and looking at how they were run and how stories were being told. I think that coupled with the crew's limited experience it made it a rougher road. But I think Pen learned a lot working with Derek Drymon and he taught him a lot of things about show production and storytelling. Every show has a bit of a learning curve and a bit of a rough start. I think it just dragged out because there was so much attention and importance put on *Adventure Time*. [Cartoon Network comedy shows] *Chowder* and *Flapjack* were ending, and *Adventure Time* was our only comedy in production so the stakes were pretty high. Myself and the people on the comedy side were very tied to it, it was the future of comedy for Cartoon Network.

Pen's old boss on *Flapjack*, Thurop Van Orman, also joined the season one crew.

[Supervising producer] Thurop Van Orman: When I came onto *Adventure Time* I was mostly just helping to pull info out of Pen and Pat and structure it a little bit. Pat and Pen are both geniuses. In the first season of *Adventure Time* they (mostly Pen) were completely re-boarding all of the episodes, which wasn't sustainable. So I just tried to help pull out of them what drives Finn and Jake, etc., so people besides Pat and Pen could tell *Adventure Time* stories. We all wrote

the outlines together and I helped structure those. But I also learned a ton from Pat and Pen. Like I said, they are geniuses.

Eric Homan: While actual production was taking place, lots of other meetings about the title, the logo, the voices, the art, the writing, and the music were also taking place. While trying to get a handle on the direction of the show himself, and now working under production deadlines, Pen did his best to please everyone and address what was important to them. It's no coincidence that Finn shouts in the early episode "Memories of Boom Boom Mountain," "Ahhhhh! Everybody wants different things! And some of them want stuff that's exactly the thing the others don't want!"

Not only did the fledgling crew have to work through these new-series kinks, but they also needed to fill the remaining holes on the production staff with qualified people immediately. The search was difficult.

[SVP/General Manager, Cartoon Network Studios] Brian Miller: When it came time to staff the series we realized very quickly that we would need to be looking for talent that could truly connect with the characters and the totally different storytelling that was being proposed. We ended up tapping into people from industries outside of animation. Pen had a handle on who he thought could relate to what he was trying to do, and many members of the crew came from independent comics.

Derek Drymon: The hardest part of the job was putting the right storyboard crew together. I had to let some people go and help Pen find artists who shared his sensibility. Pen was attracted to younger, inexperienced people, which made production more difficult. In the end I think he did a great job of gathering the right crew. They were really creative and eager to prove themselves.

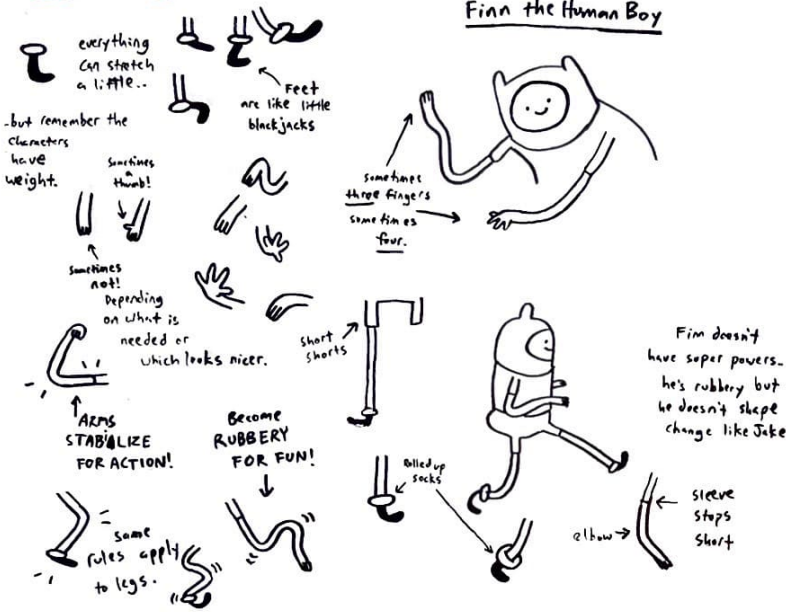
Pat McHale: It was *really* hard finding people to work on the show when it first got picked up because one, the Internet wasn't quite as full of artists' work as it is

(Continued on page 47)



PEN'S HOW-TO GUIDE

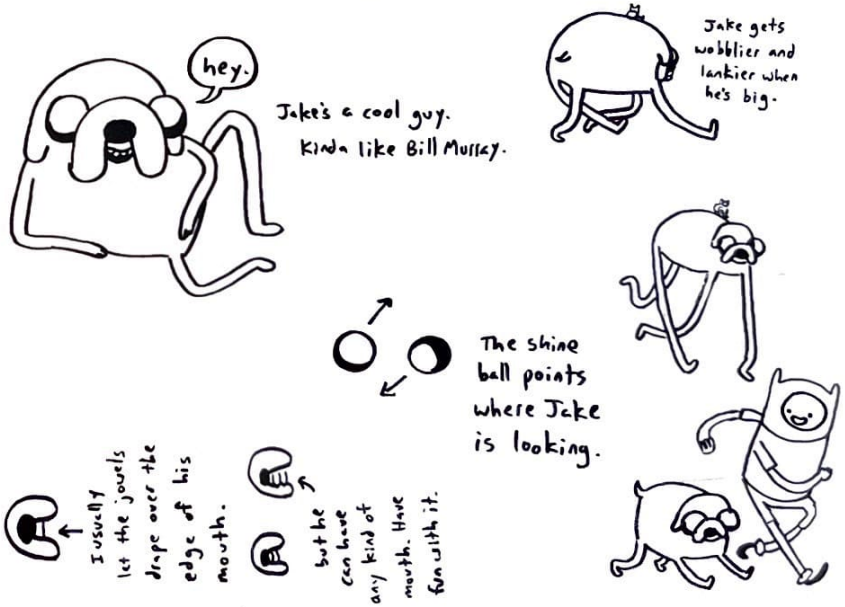
Finn the Human Boy

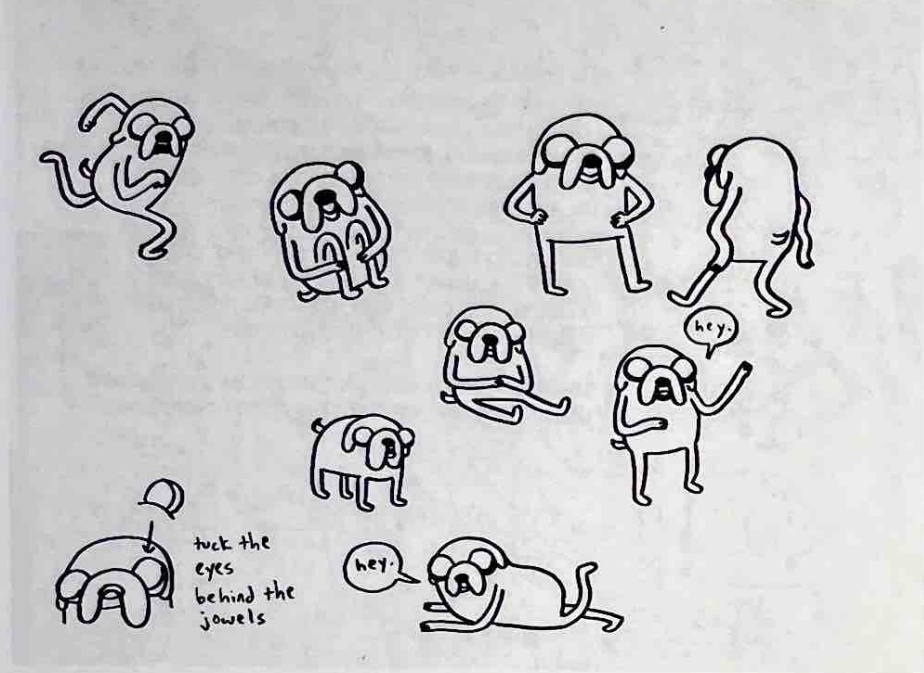


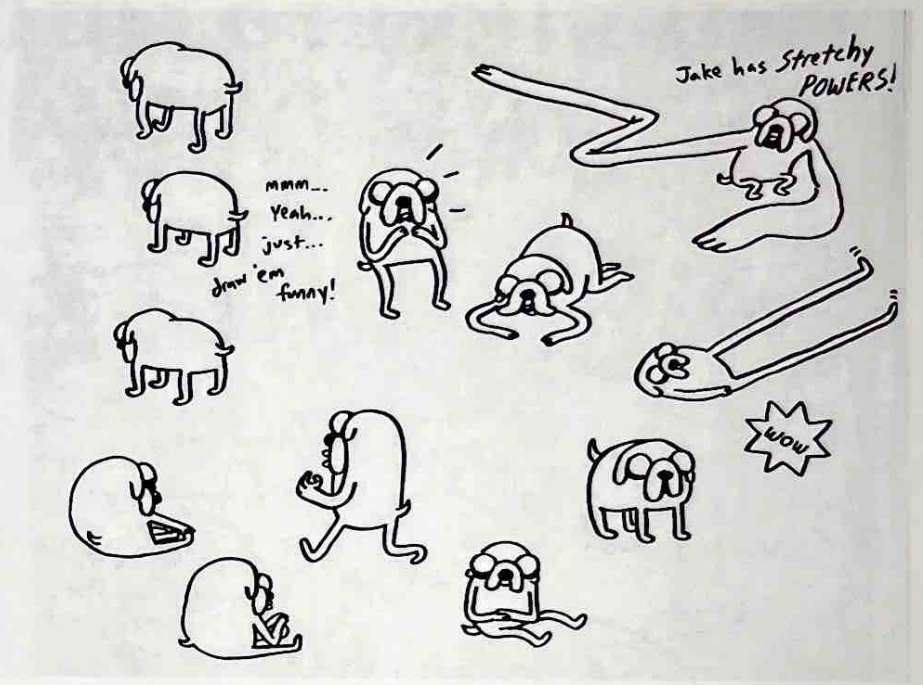


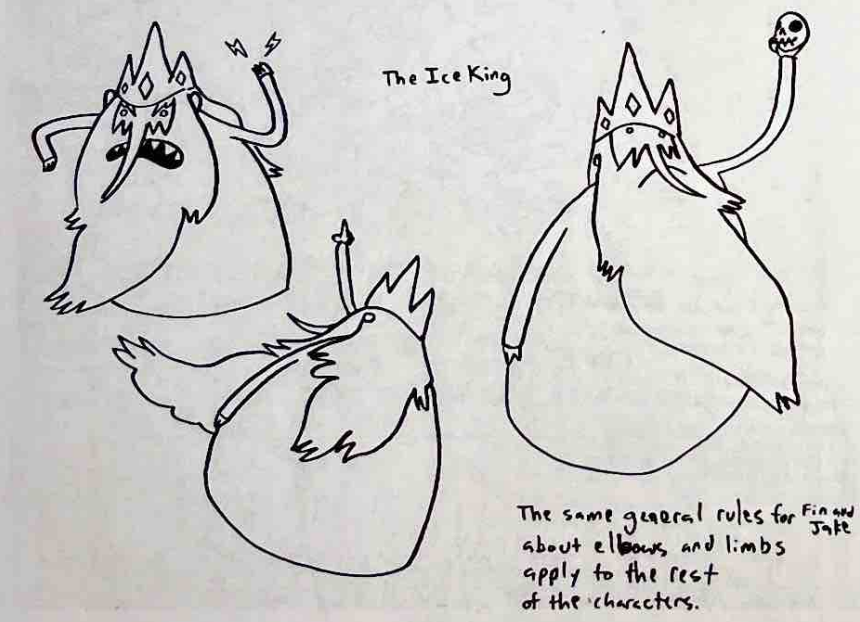


Jake the Dog







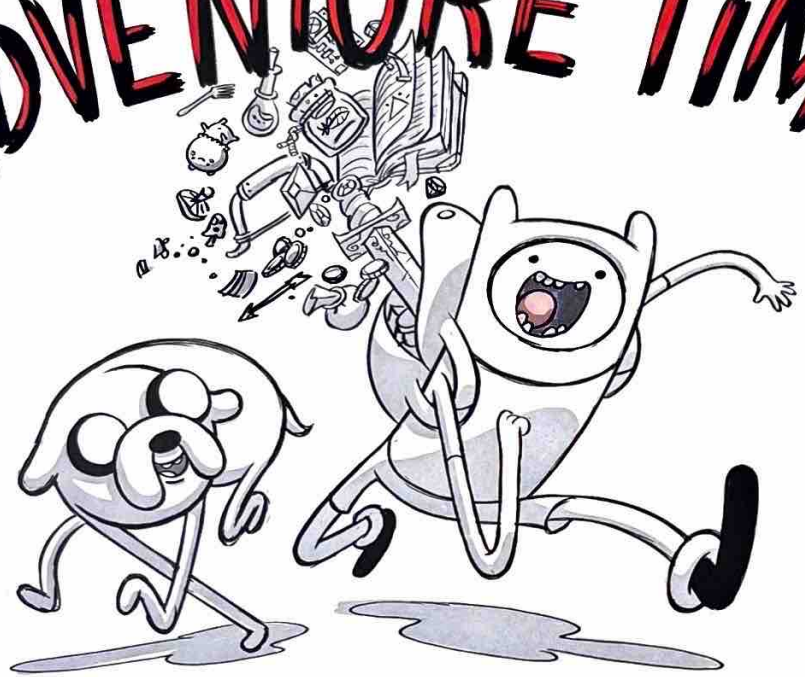




This spread: Pages from a "How to Draw *Adventure Time*" guide by Pen, October 2008.

PHIL'S HOW-TO GUIDE

HOW TO DRAW ADVENTURE TIME!

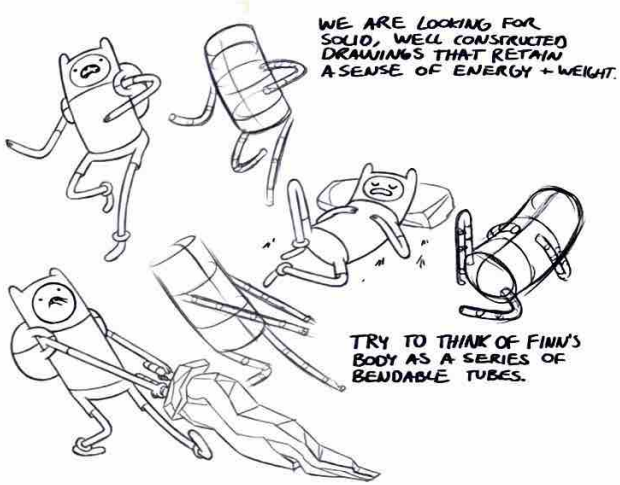


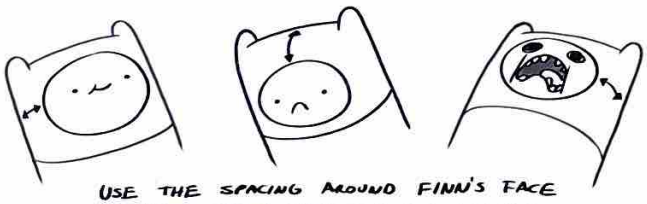
ADVENTURE TIME CHARACTER STYLE NOTES

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES YOU WILL SEE SOME GENERAL RULES AND GUIDES THAT WILL HOPEFULLY HELP YOU DRAW THE CHARACTERS IN ADVENTURE TIME.

BUT ALSO KNOW THAT ALL OF THESE "RULES" ARE INTENDED AS A PLACE TO START, NOT AS THE ONE AND ONLY WAY TO DRAW FOR THIS SHOW. WE WANT YOU TO HAVE FUN.

WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR "ON MODEL" DRAWINGS. WE'RE LOOKING FOR "IN CHARACTER" DRAWINGS.





USE THE SPACING AROUND FINN'S FACE TO HELP SHOW DIRECTION AND VOLUME.



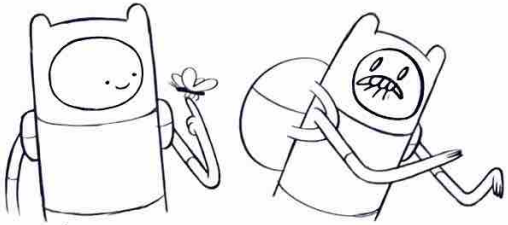


THE PROPORTIONS OF FINN'S "FACE HOLE" CAN CHANGE FROM SCENE TO SCENE.

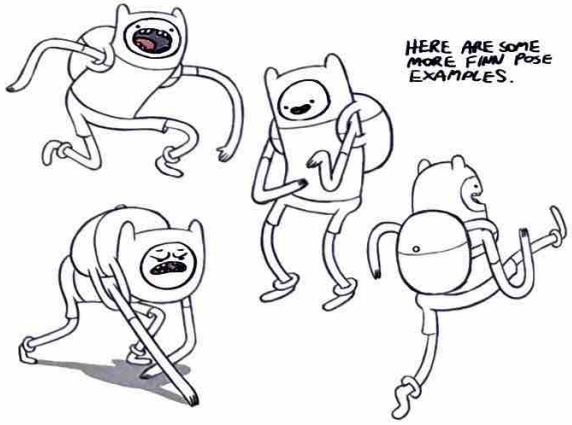
WE DON'T WANT IT TO GET TOO SQUASHED.

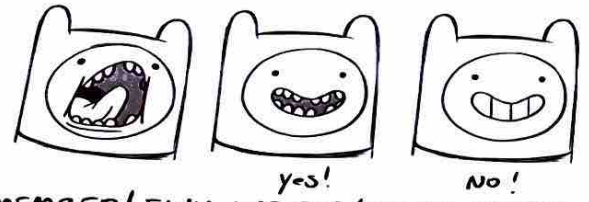
BUT PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PUSH THIS IDEA FOR SPECIAL POSES, ESPECIALLY IF IT'S USED TO SELL AN EMOTION.





FINN'S FACIAL FEATURES CAN ALSO BE DRAWN TO FAVOR A DIRECTION. THEY ARE NOT LOCKED DOWN TO HIS CENTER LINE.



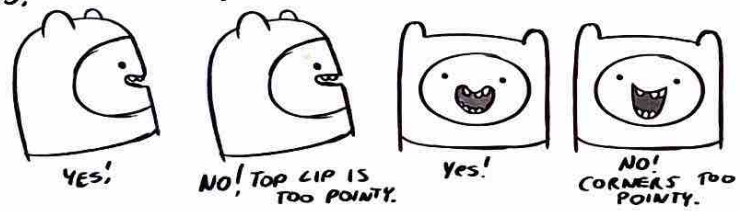


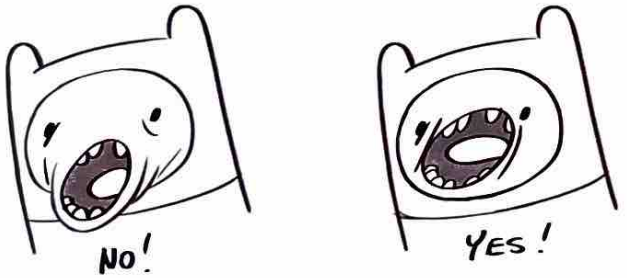
REMEMBER! FINN HAS BAD/MISSING TEETH. HE'S NEVER BEEN TO THE DENTIST.



WATCH OUT FOR "BEAKY-NESS" WITH MOUTHS.

DON'T LET MOUTHS HAVE POINTS. THEY SHOULD HAVE SOFT CURVES.

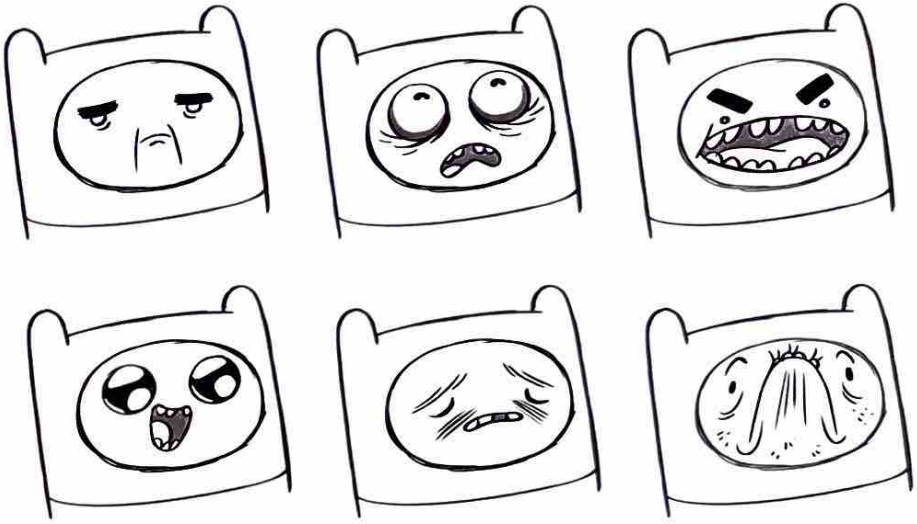




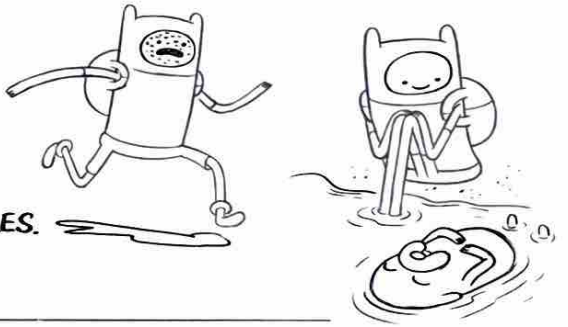
TRY NOT TO BREAK THE FRAMING OF FINN'S HOOD WITH HIS FACIAL FEATURES.

THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION, BUT JUST TRY TO KEEP YOUR DRAWINGS FUNNY AND ATTRACTIVE.



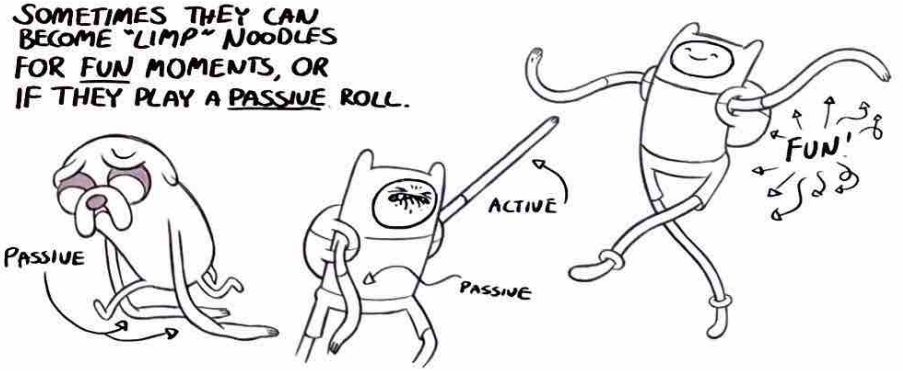


FEEL FREE TO PUSH FINN'S EXPRESSIONS. ESPECIALLY IN CLOSE UP. BE ADVENTUROUS!



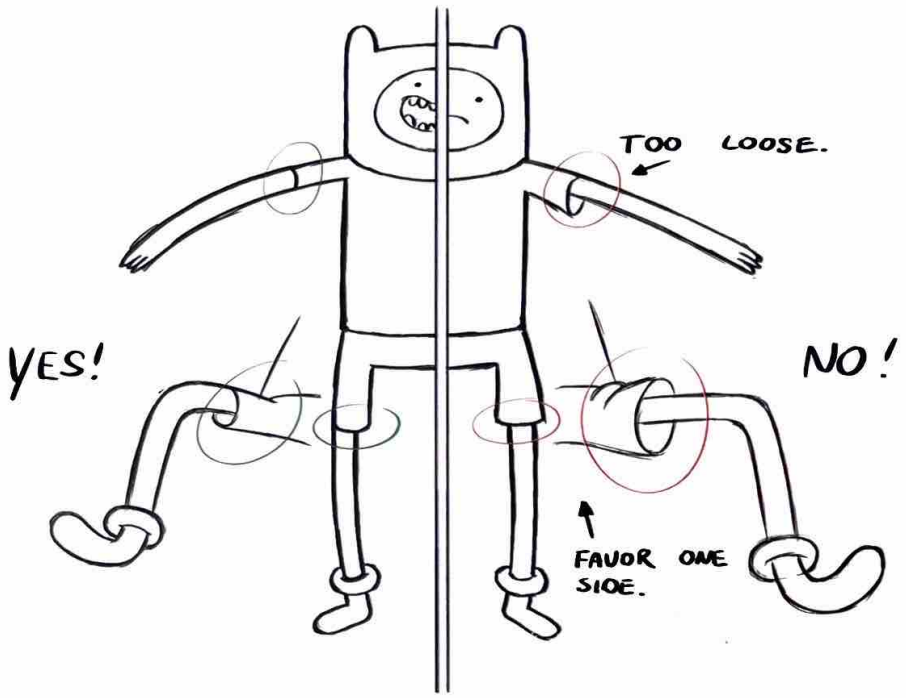
MOST OF THE TIME, LIMBS SHOULD BE SOLID. THINK "AL DENTE" NOODLES.

SOMETIMES THEY CAN BECOME "LIMP" NOODLES FOR FUN MOMENTS, OR IF THEY PLAY A PASSIVE ROLL.



This spread: Pages from "How to Draw *Adventure Time*!" by Phil Rynda, April 2009.

FINN'S CLOTHING SHOULD BE FORM-FITTING.





HANDS CAN HAVE 3, 4, or 5 FINGERS.

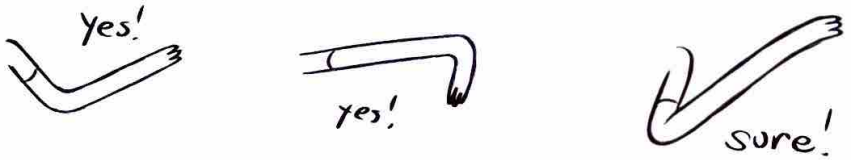
IN MOST SITUATIONS, ARMS HAVE ELBOWS.



THE ELBOWS HAVE SOFT CURVES.



AND THE ELBOWS CAN BREAK ALMOST ANYWHERE.



REMEMER-

JAKE CAN GROW, BUT FINN CANNOT!



(Continued from page 41)
now, and two, there weren't many people at that time who had the right attributes.

Pen's style looks "simple," but it's not easy. Most of our early design tests [see page 174 for an example design test] were really lazy because people just thought, "Oh, I can draw that. Smiley face on a triangle body equals candy-corn man." But there is a lot of nuance and structure. I think that's more obvious now, because there are more and more people who actually draw in that style now. But at the time, there seemed to be nobody.

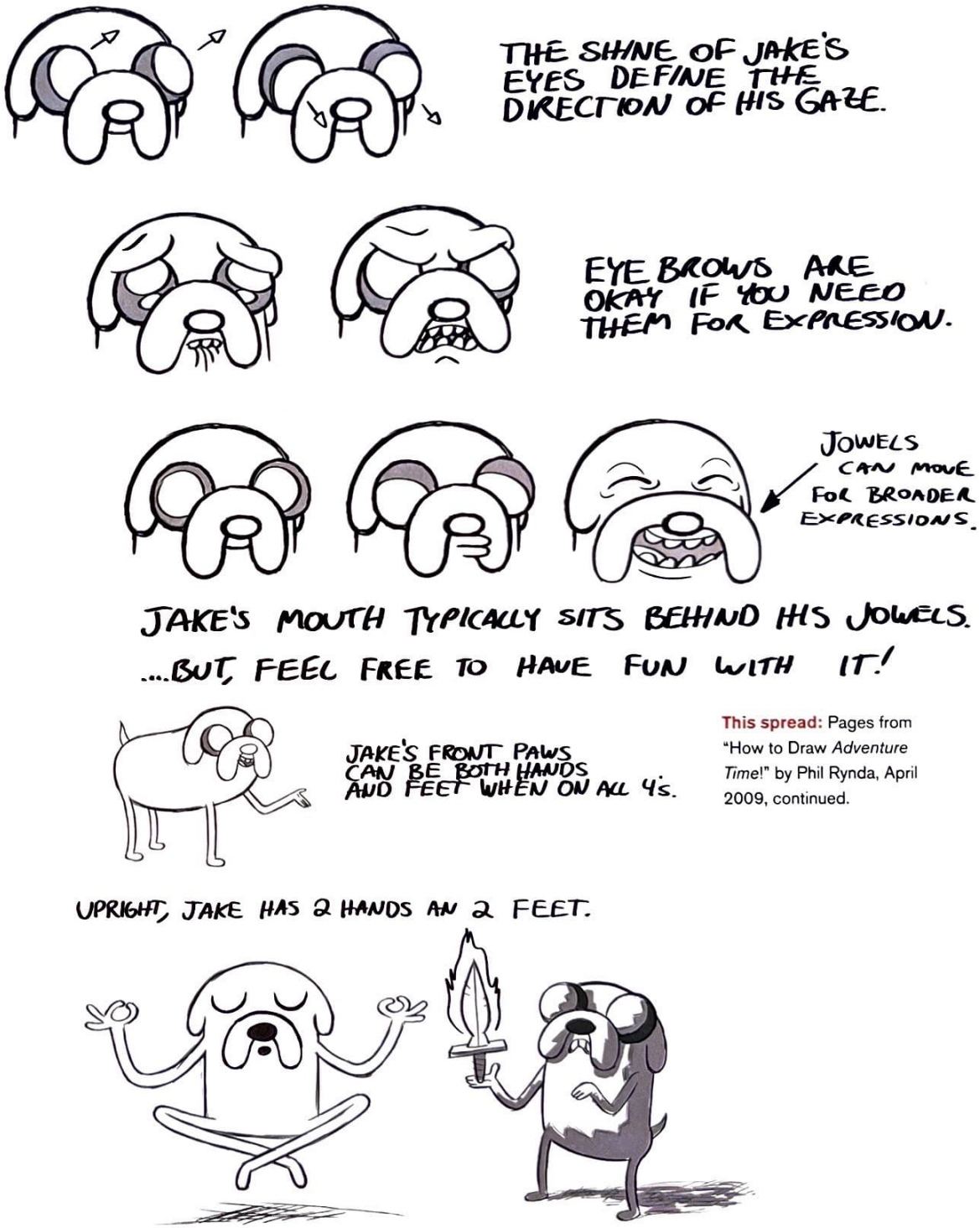
One day Pen was combing the Internet for someone who had the right natural sensibilities, and he found this drawing of a kitten stuck inside of an apple. He wanted to track the artist down to see if they would be a good fit for the show—and it turned out to be *my* drawing that I'd drawn in a friend's sketchbook. So that was another dead end.

Pen was actively involved with the search for talent online and in person.

Pen Ward: I was aware of the talented people who put themselves in the public eye—indie comics guys and gals who would go to comic conventions or had rad blogs or YouTube channels. In the beginning, I was scouring the web hard-core . . . one artist would link to their favorite artists and so on. . . . I was clicking everything, trying to find artists who matched my sensibilities to some degree, or rather, trying to find artists whose work appealed to me.

The call also went out through the typical studio channels and networks of animation professionals to take storyboarding and design tests for the show.

Pat McHale: When we got all the design tests in for the first season, we were like, "This is gonna be a disaster. Nobody gets it." But [show director] Larry Leichliter told us to take a second look at Phil Rynda's test because he knew Phil personally and knew he could draw really solid and in basically any style. We looked at the test and were like, "Ehh . . . I dunno." But then we looked at some of his other work and saw that he could draw in lots of different styles, and that he could draw really well. So we gave him another



This spread: Pages from "How to Draw *Adventure Time*!" by Phil Rynda, April 2009, continued.





Above, left to right: Pen, Keith Mack, Nick Jennings, Thomas Herpich, Dick Grunert, Natasha Allegri, and Pen again in the conference room transformed for an internal *Adventure Time* presentation at Cartoon Network.

Below: A temporary-tattoo design by Andy Ristaino.

Opposite: Twenty-five Finn heads designed by the crew as part of the Cartoon Network presentation.



assignment. He had to do a turn-around for a super-lumpy-looking drawing of Finn inside of a muscley Jake (Jakesuit). He did it perfectly! He kept track of all the muscle lumps as if Pen's drawing was a sculpture, and the drawing suddenly became a three-dimensional thing. So Phil was hired!

As the lead character designer, Phil Rynda immediately began to work with the existing team to further develop a framework of visual style and designs for the show's characters.

Pat McHale: Phil and I sat around for many hours dissecting Pen's style and trying to understand what worked and what didn't work. I don't think Pen liked seeing rules being put into place at that point . . . so I think that's why we usually did it without him. But we would grab scraps of drawings from his desk, or the garbage or whatever, and try to understand why they were so appealing. Phil got really into it and developed lots of theories that would later become the rules. Though, as Pen has said, one of the rules is that we can change the rules when something better comes along. The show looks a lot better now than it did in the first season.

Pen's previous personal animation and cartooning work was a source of visual information for dissection and study by the new crew. Bueno the Bear was the star of comic strips and short animated films that Pen had created during his years at CalArts and beyond, such as the short *Barrista*, which had gained wide exposure as part of the Channel Frederator cartoon podcast.

Phil Rynda: Pen just taps into an intuitive simplicity. His cartooning is pure. When I first saw Pen's *Bueno the Bear* cartoons, they hit me on a gut level. They weren't classically beautiful or perfectly animated. But they were honest and funny. Same goes for how I felt watching the first *Adventure Time* short. It made me want to work with Pen on *Adventure Time*.

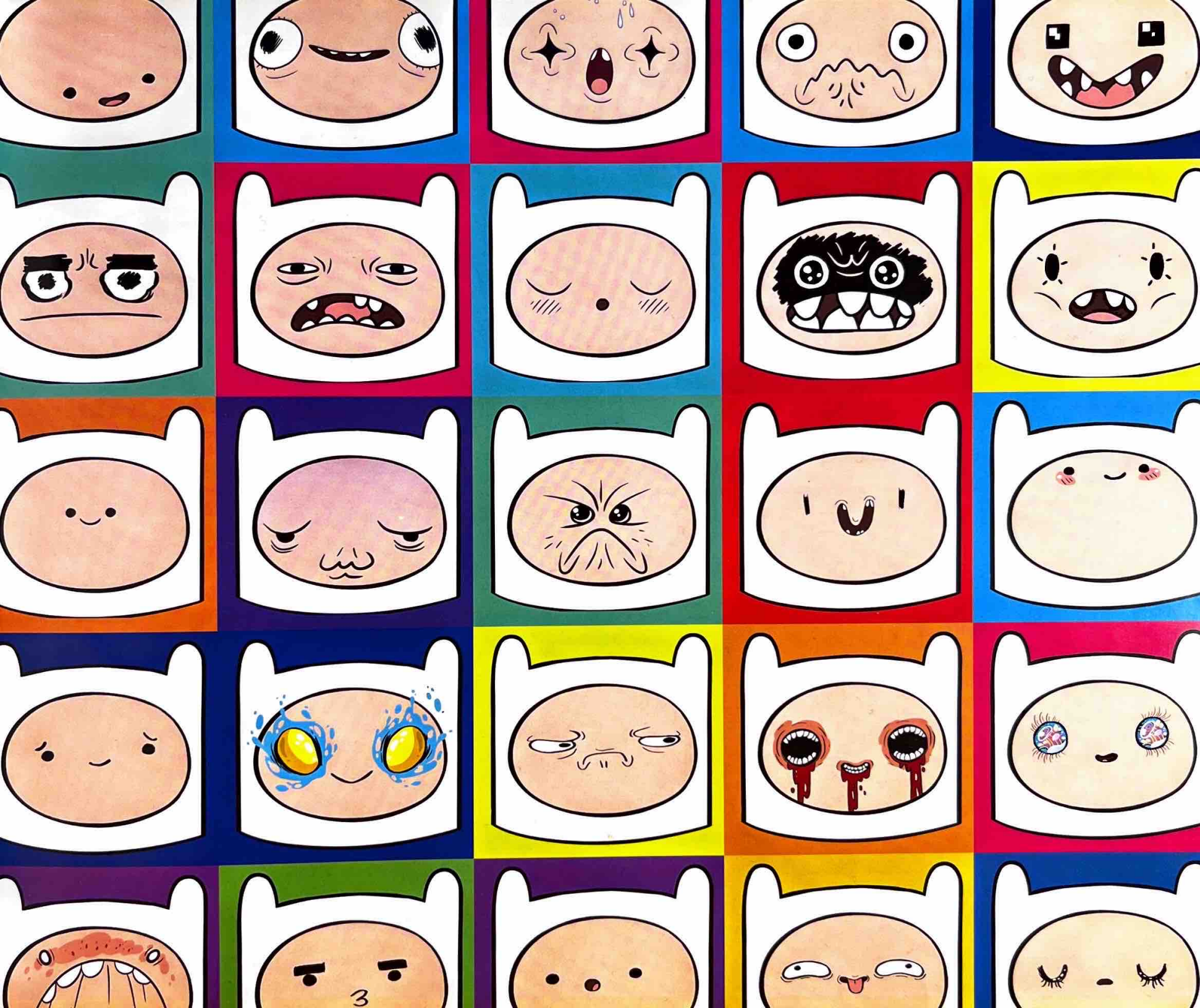
As the production began to finally coalesce, an art show and presentation was scheduled for the *Adventure Time* crew to reintroduce themselves and the show that they had been working on to the Cartoon Network management team and staff. Among the crew, it was understood that the show's fate was still uncertain, even at this stage.

Phil Rynda: This presentation and show was a way for everyone from different parts of the company to become familiar with *Adventure Time*, as well as the other new shows, and to talk to some of us working on it.

I remember Pat made a mock-up of what an *Adventure Time* card game could be. We made a really funny screen saver with floating clouds that would cycle for four minutes or so, and then for exactly one frame, a crazy full-screen image of [the creepy living-heart character] Ricardio's face would flash.

We put up a ton of images of "Finn faces" showing the idea of the range of styles and emotions we wanted Finn to be able to achieve. [Designer and storyboard artist and revisionist] Natasha Allegri did a particularly gross one where Finn had bleeding mouths for his eyes and mouth. . . . We hid that one behind the conference room door.

(Continued on page 56)



PEN-STYLE CARTOONING



some drawings and thoughts about the drawings of

PENDLETON WARD



CUTENESS

Some Broad Observations

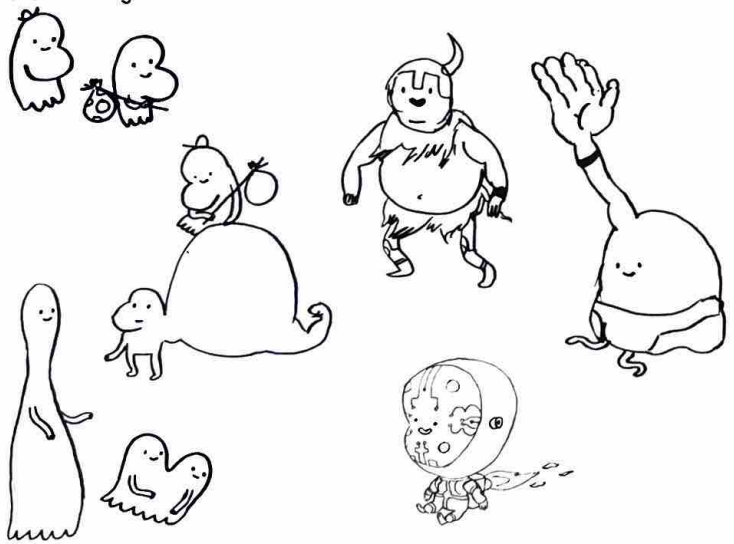
- Simplicity of Shape -

Characters can be designed as one dominant shape with smaller supporting shapes

- Facial Features are Given Space to Breath -

Facial details and features can be quite small, contrasting large cranium shapes, allowing for a lot of empty space

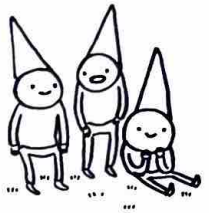
- Delicate Posing -

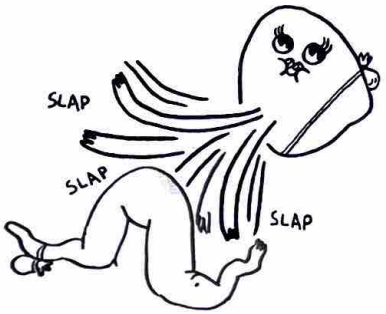


This spread: Observations illustrated with examples of Pen's drawings compiled by Phil Rynda for the crew's use during season one production.

This is a selection of Pen's drawings that we've tried to organize into a few catagories.

We hope that you can find some inspiration in the following pages, and in no way are we expecting you to draw like Pen. The drawings of Adventure Time should retain some of the qualities presented in Pen's drawings, but it's really the thinking behind the drawings that's most important.





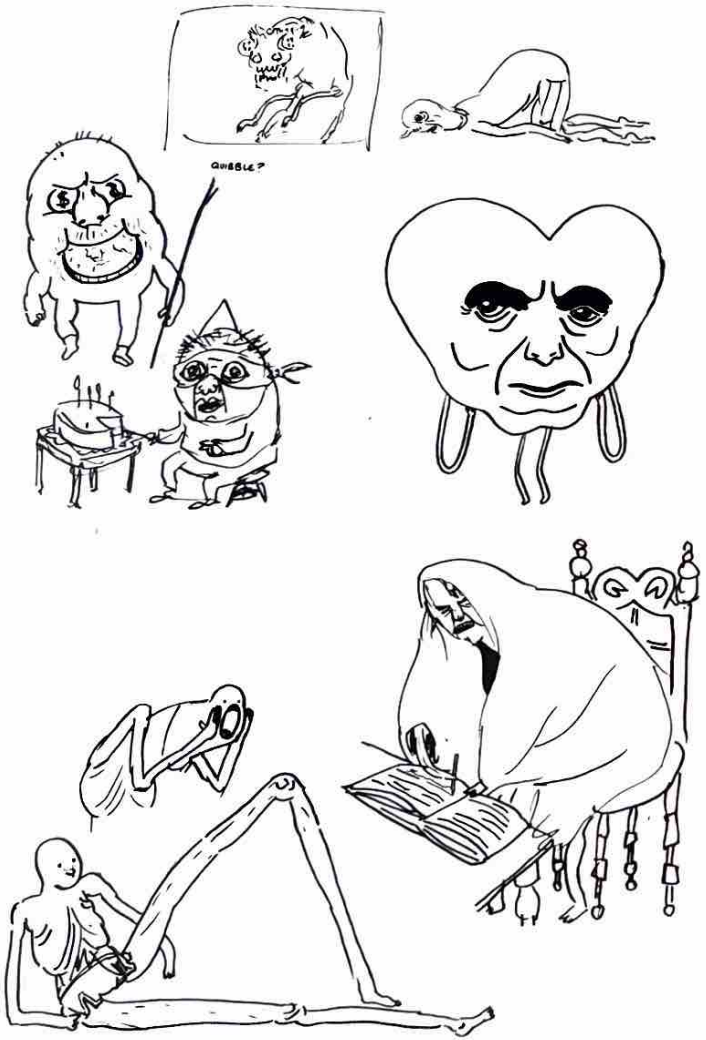


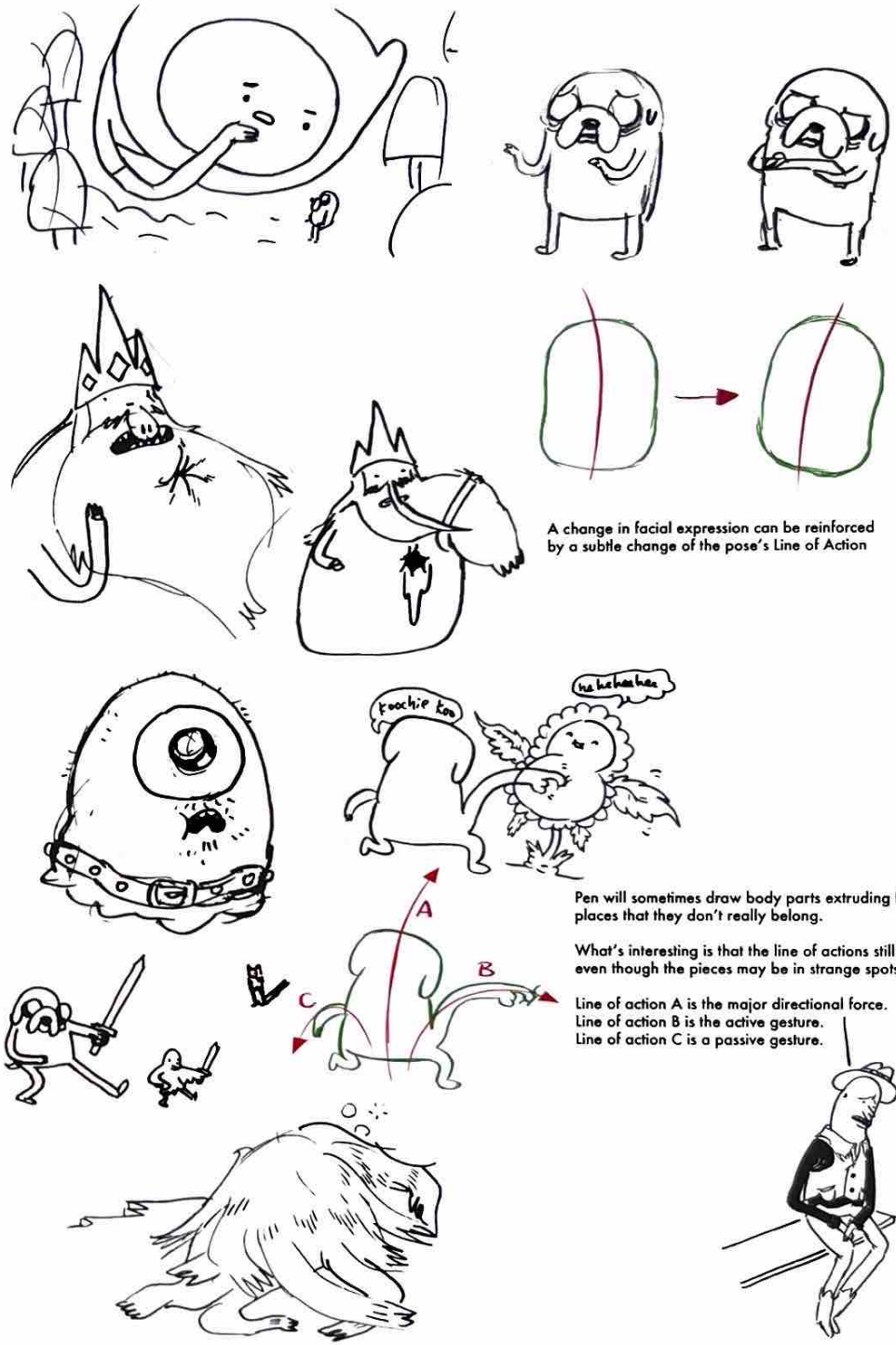
THE GROTESQUE
General Observations

-this is a great example of "the art of the ugly drawing"

-there is still an overall sense of appeal that is retained
- -variety of proportions
- -solid construction
- -clear and interesting posing

-And above all, even the grossest drawings should be FUNNY!





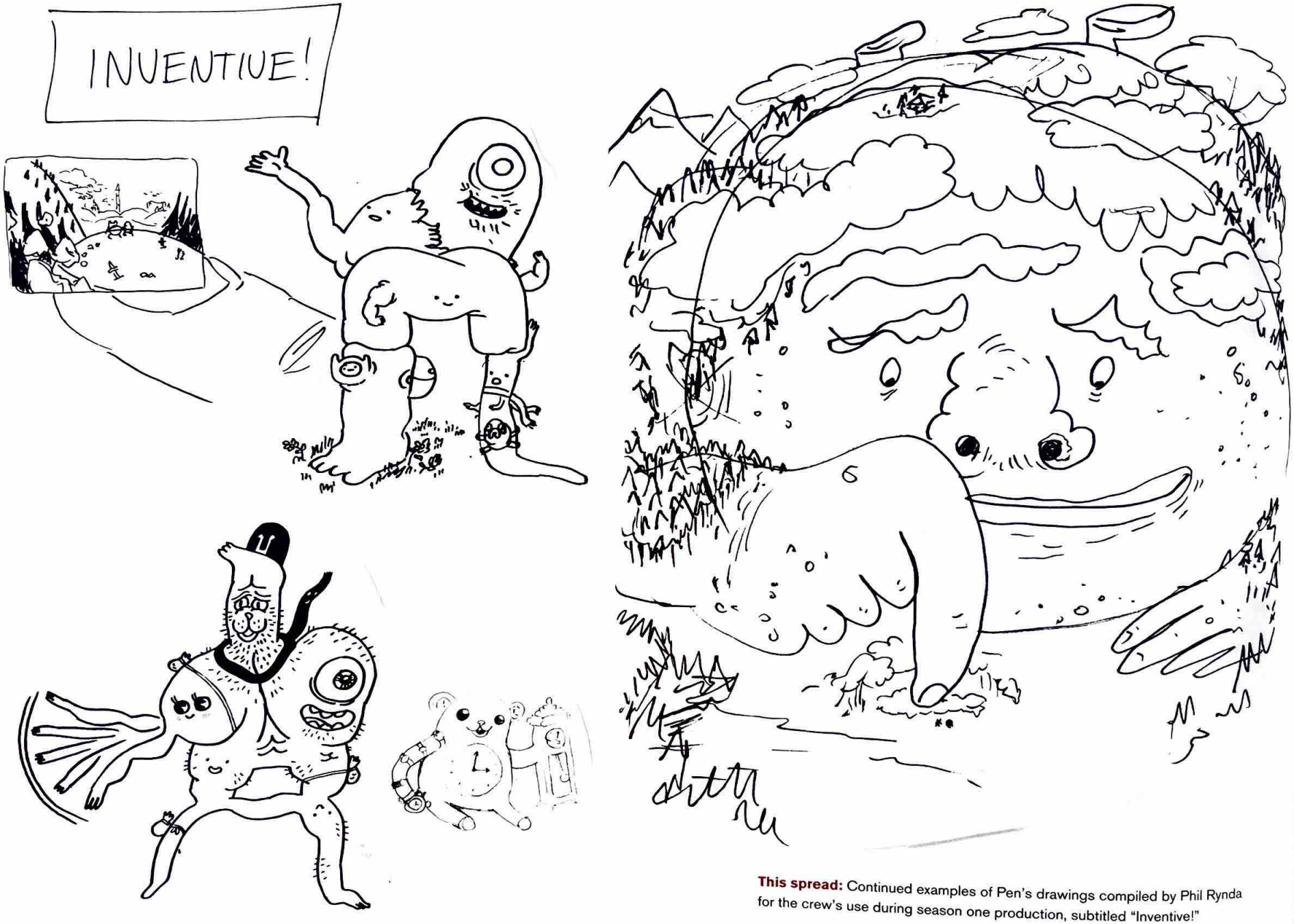
A change in facial expression can be reinforced by a subtle change of the pose's Line of Action

Pen will sometimes draw body parts extruding from places that they don't really belong.

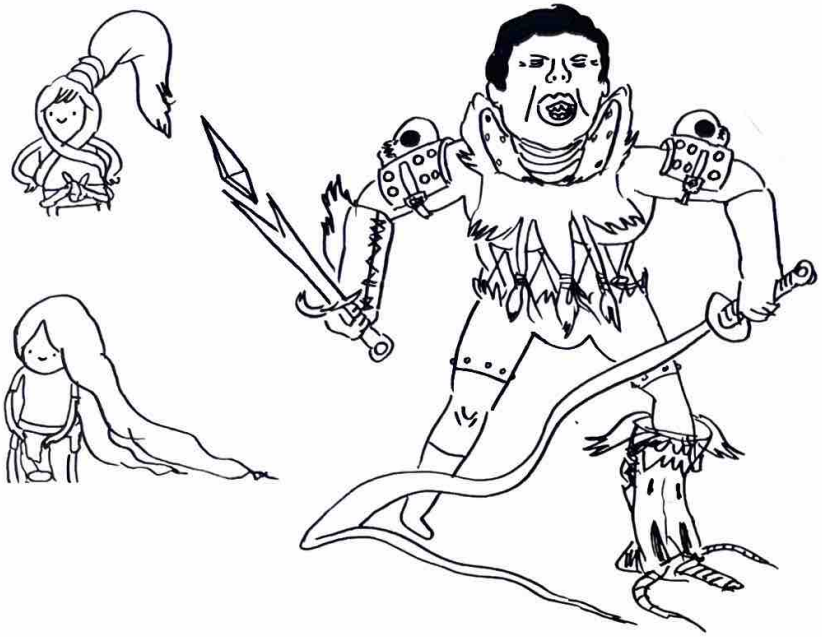
What's interesting is that the line of actions still flow even though the pieces may be in strange spots.

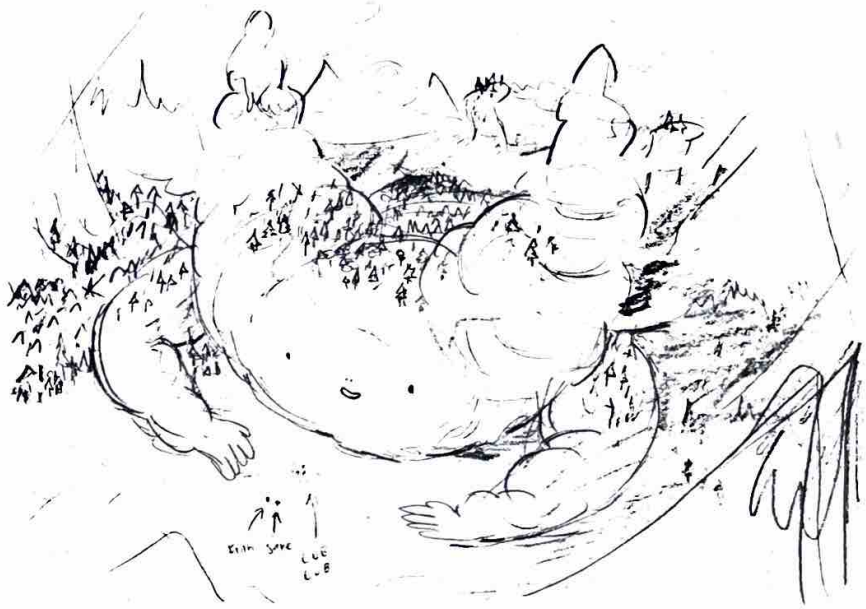
Line of action A is the major directional force.
Line of action B is the active gesture.
Line of action C is a passive gesture.

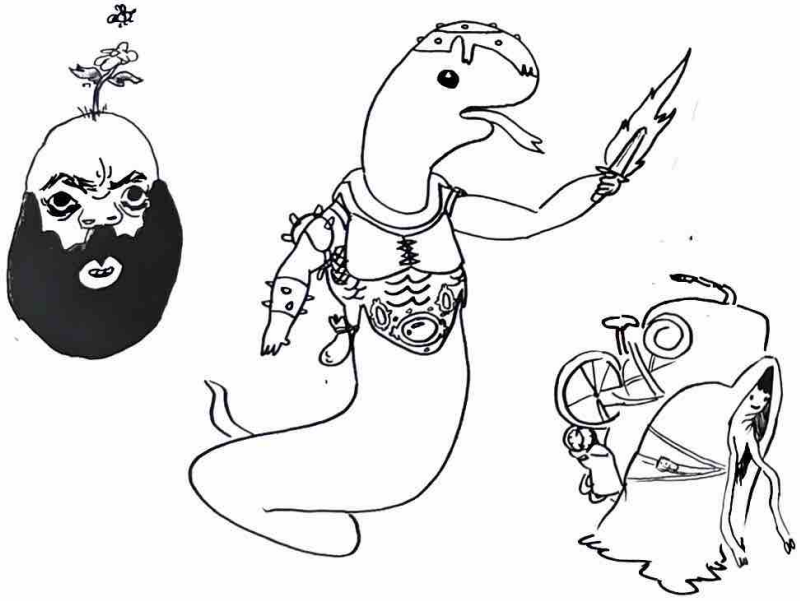
PEN-STYLE CARTOONING



This spread: Continued examples of Pen's drawings compiled by Phil Rynda for the crew's use during season one production, subtitled "Inventive!"

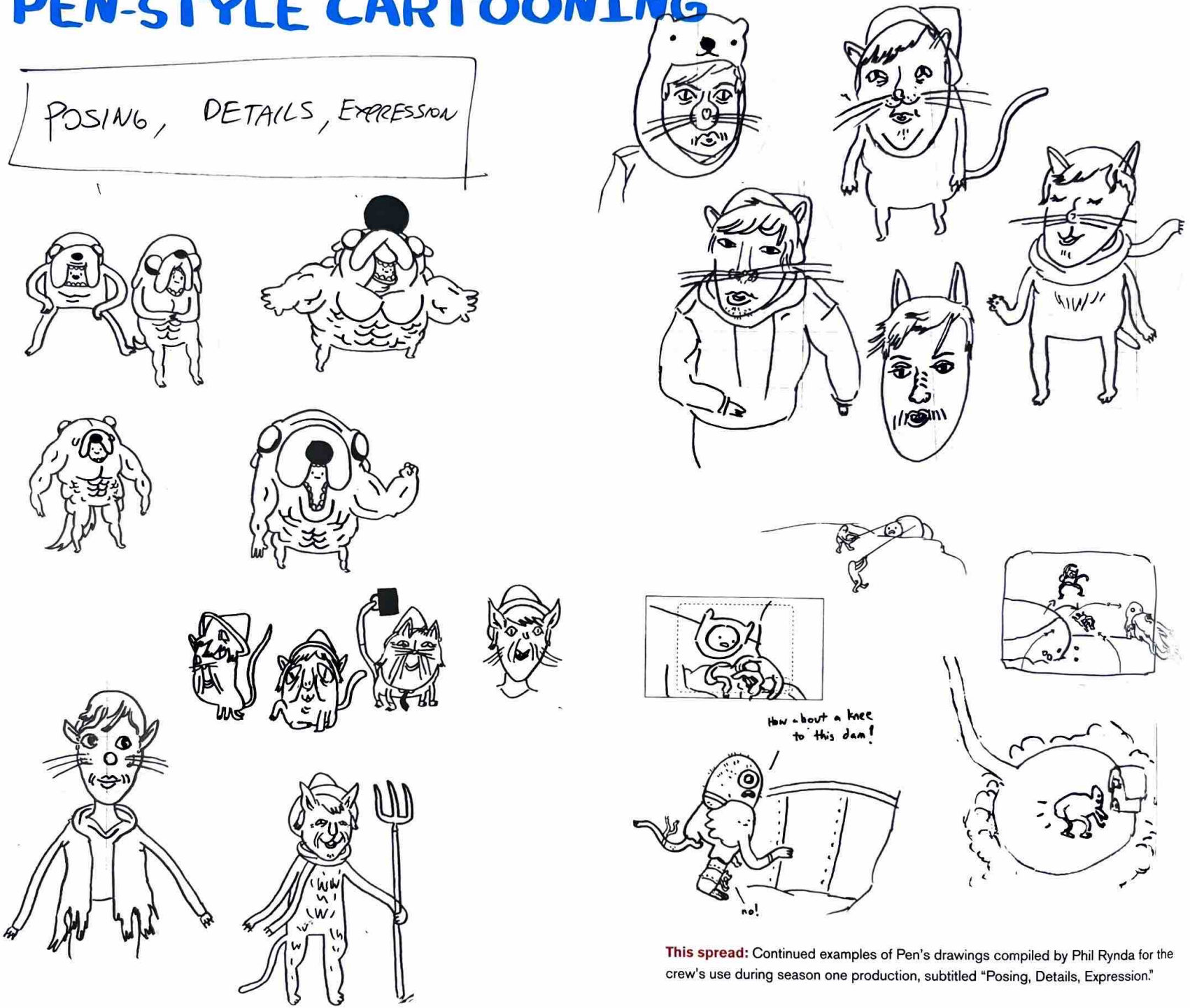




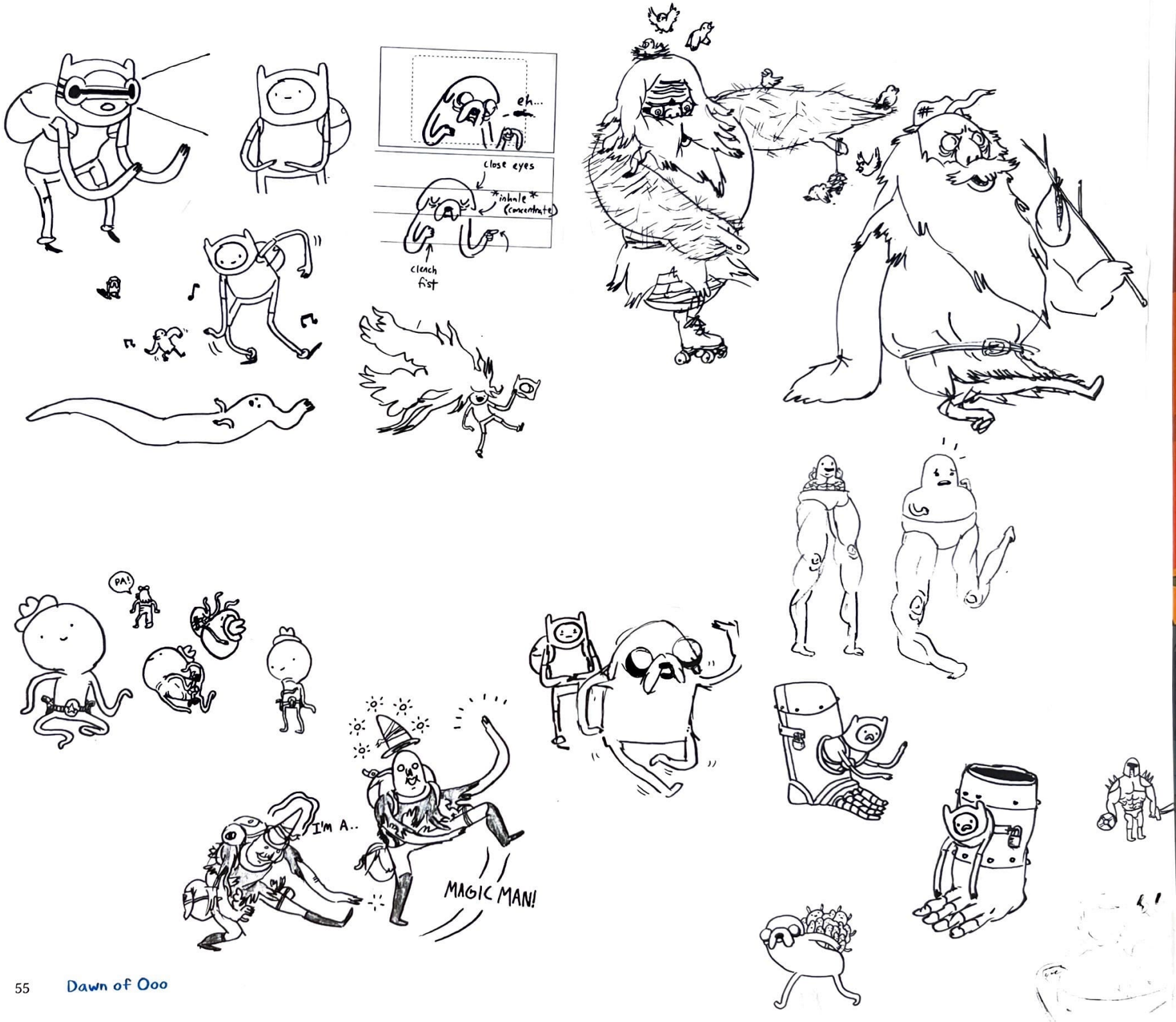




PEN-STYLE CARTOONING



This spread: Continued examples of Pen's drawings compiled by Phil Rynda for the crew's use during season one production, subtitled "Posing, Details, Expression."


eh...
close eyes
inhale (concentrate)
clench fist
PA!
I'M A..
MAGIC MAN!



Top row: Thurop Van Orman, Tom Kenny, Jessica Yost, Kent Osborne, Niki Yang, Adam Muto, Pat McHale, Kevin Kolde, Fred Seibert, Phil Rynda, Ghostshrimp (Dan James), Jesse Moynihan.

Bottom row: Armen Mirzaian, Somvilay Xayaphone, Dick Grunert, Patrick Seery, Sean Szeles, Benton Connor, Thomas Herpich, Rebecca Sugar, Ian Jones-Quartey.



(Continued from page 48)

We wanted to influence the people from our consumer products and promotions departments. I think it worked on some levels. The screen saver got rebuilt and was available as a download on Cartoon Network's website. The Finn faces ended up on T-shirts.

In that big first art meeting, we told the room that this is a show where if a character gets cut, they'll bleed. If they die, they die. This was a big deal for us when explaining the show to people seeing it for the first time. I think this was problematic for a lot of people in the room, because we were making a Cartoon Network comedy with a character made out of bubblegum, a rainbow horse, and a boy and his talking dog. It was an uphill battle to convince the network that a show like this could work—that it could still be funny, and fun for kids.

Rob Sorcher: I will tell you, when I stood in that room, and I saw all of it put together after that long period of development, I knew it right at that moment, and I even said it in that room, "You just don't stand inside this kind of a world very often, something that is completely realized." I knew that it was something very, very new. I could see that it had extensions. I didn't know exactly what they would be. But you could feel that it was more than just a cartoon, standing in that room.



Adventure Time premiered on April 5th, 2010, on Cartoon Network, to an expectant audience. The show, which had been so difficult to sell or even summarize succinctly, was now suddenly real and being broadcast—a candy-covered vision with a post-apocalyptic center being devoured by millions of eyeballs worldwide. For the network, it was an immediate ratings success that proved to be *ongoing*—an essential standard for a commercial production's longevity. For audiences, it was a breath of fresh air—a cartoon that hooked imaginations into an original world filled with characters that they felt meaningfully connected to and enjoyed spending time with. For the crew, all of their work had been justified. Their new show was inspiring strong reactions in people—both children and adults.



Top row: Casey Basichis, Eric Homan, Curtis Lelash, Tammy List, Susy Campos, Mike Collins, Deborah Collins, Cassia Streb, JG Quintel, Amanda Rynda, Phil Rynda, Sue Mondt, Kasey Fagerquist, Elizabeth Ito, Sean Jimenez, Brigette Jimenez.

Bottom row: Sean Jimenez, Pen Ward, Kelly Crews, Keith Mack, Carolyn Suzuki, Krandal Crews, Cole Sanchez, Martin Olson, Martin Ansolabehere, Sandra Calleros, Catherine E. Simmonds, Kelly Crews, Ako Castuera, Illya Owens.

Pen Ward: I remember watching the premiere together with the crew and executives. We were in a sticky bar in Hollywood; there was some buffet Indian food. I think everyone had a fine time. The part that I enjoyed the most was going online afterward, scouring the Internet for reviews, and checking out the funny fan drawings that slowly rolled in. It was hard to find people discussing it online in the beginning. The writers and I could only find this one general cartoon forum that had just a few users talking about it. I loved hearing kids say that they thought it sucked. Plenty of people enjoy it, but my favorite reviews are the ones that simply say, "This sucks." I enjoy it so much . . . I think because . . . it's the densest and most thoughtless expression and it annihilates . . . everything. All the effort I put into the show . . . decimated by some turd writing "this sucks" online. It's humbling, and I like the feeling of staying grounded.

Remaining grounded was a useful state to be in for the entire crew. Appreciating the magnitude of it or not, Pen and crew were now responsible for creating a full-blown pop-culture phenomenon. Today, adding to the daily responsibilities of producing the show, there are publicity and marketing promotions; press interviews; merchandise, toy, and game development; comic-book spin-offs; and comic conventions all competing for attention. And of course, there is the ubiquitous voice of the Internet.

For the crew to maintain psychic harmony (and get some work done), it is necessary to manage their exposure and reactions to public and critical commentary about the show. Storyboard artist Jesse Moynihan takes an all-in approach.

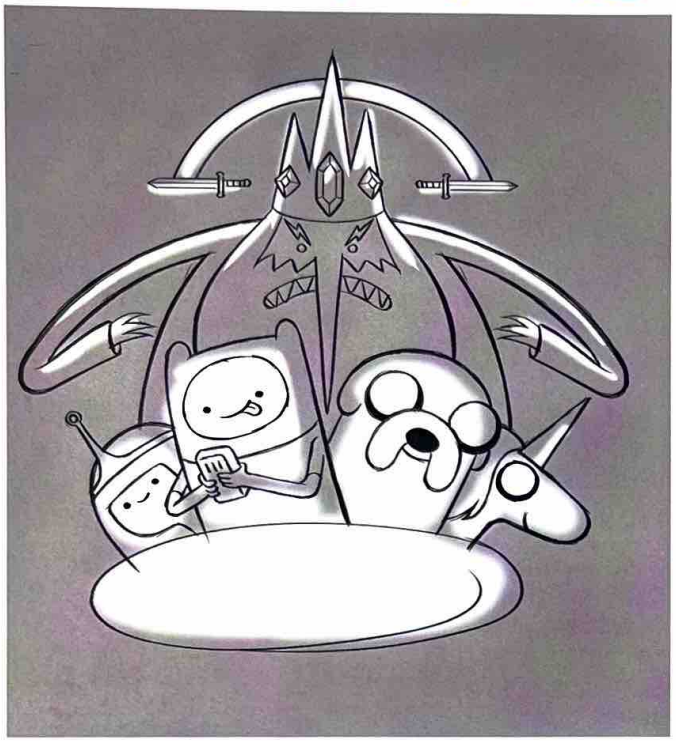
Jesse Moynihan: My eyes are glued to 4chan, Reddit, Something Awful, and Tumblr [public and optionally anonymous discussion forum and blog websites where *Adventure Time* topics can be found regularly. Notably, these sites are not (in theory) meant to be used by the young "target demographic" of the show, so discussions here can be adult in nature]. I'm constantly monitoring fan reaction to episodes. I even watch new episodes while they're streaming with a live commentary scroll. It makes me feel insane, but I can't seem to stop looking. I experience every kind

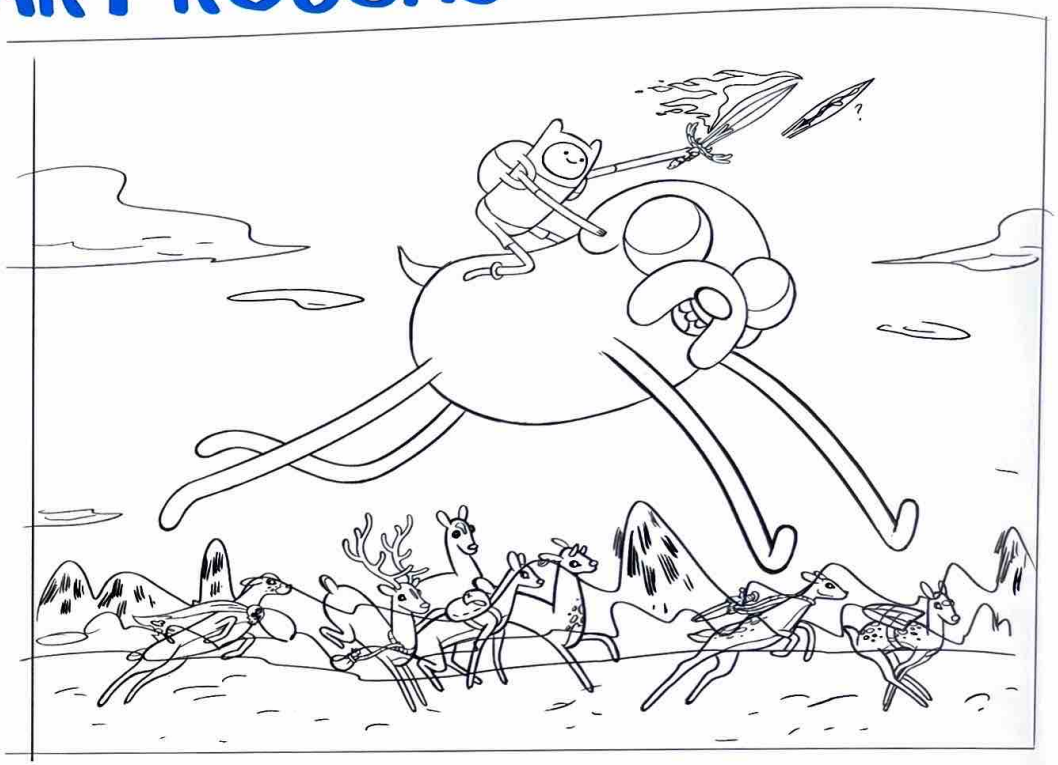
(Continued on page 60)



Opposite and above: Pat McHale's and Pen's approval stamp designs, used to stamp their approval onto production design sheets.

PROMOTIONAL ART ROUGHS

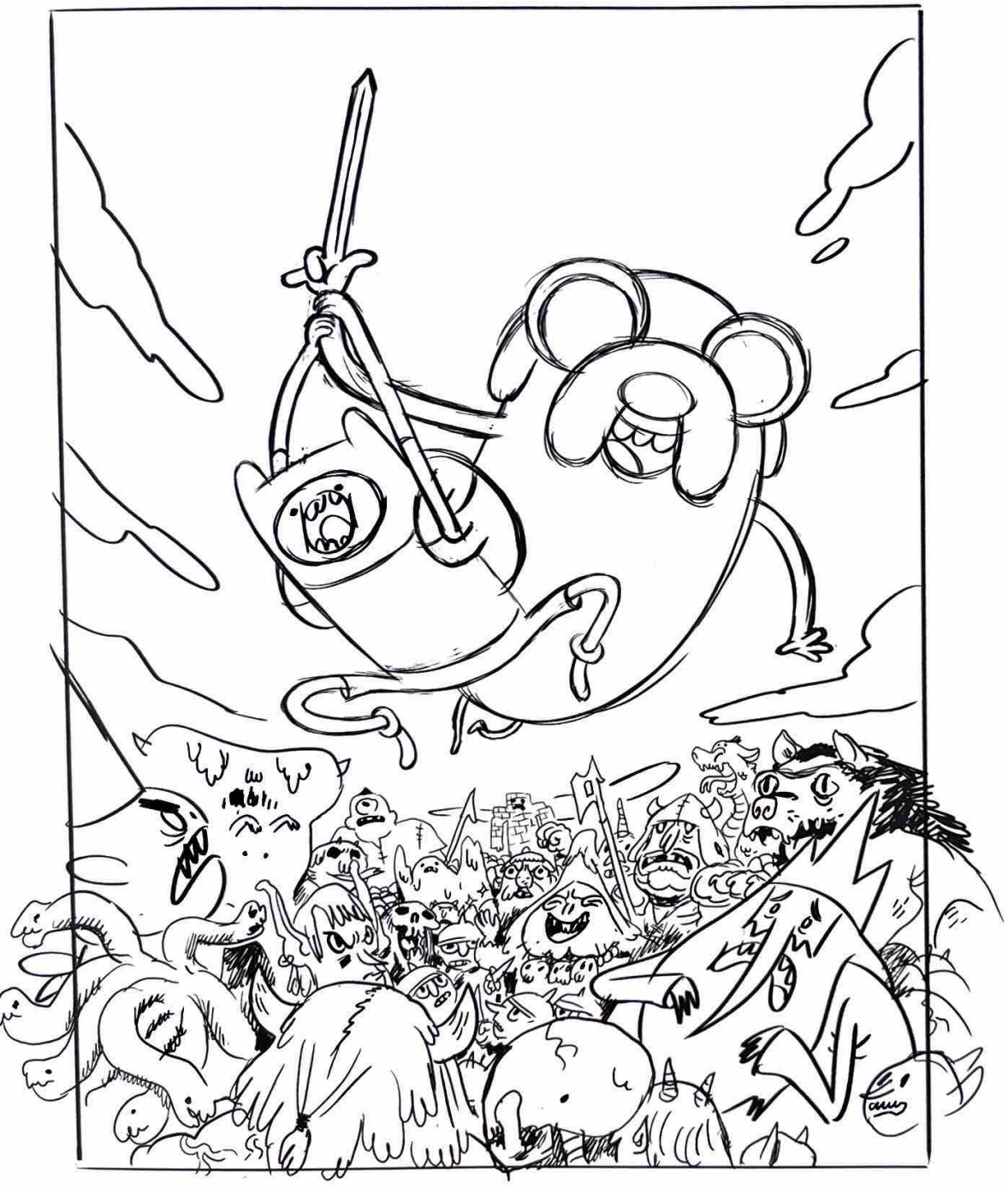




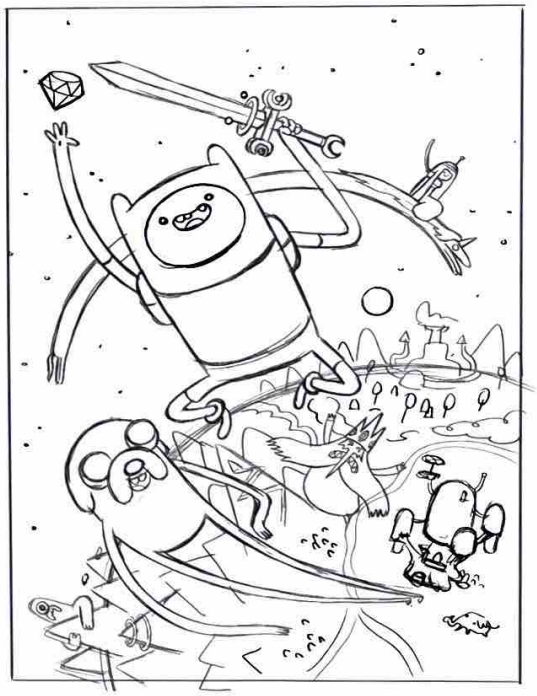
This page: Preliminary drawings for promotional art by Phil Rynda.





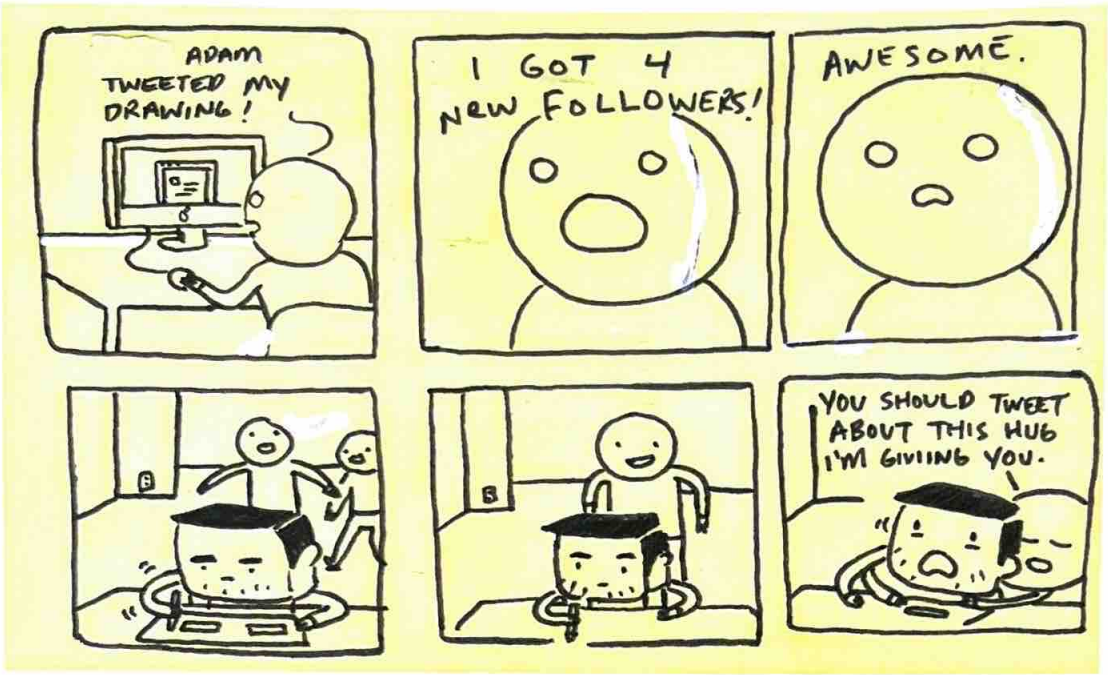






Left: Rough promotional drawing by Phil Rynda and Thomas Herpich.

Above: Promotional roughs by Phil Rynda.



Above: A Post-it-note comic by storyboard artist Cole Sanchez illustrating both intrastudio hugs and the fact that the crew artists are individually known, followed, and interacted with by dedicated fans of the show.

(Continued from page 57)

of emotion through them: gratefulness, frustration, anticipation, disappointment, joy, resentment, slight indifference, confusion, wonder, and mostly extreme self-doubt. Self-doubt seems to be the fuel that compels me to try hard.

Designer and storyboard artist Thomas Herpich tries hard to manage his exposure to the stream of commentary.

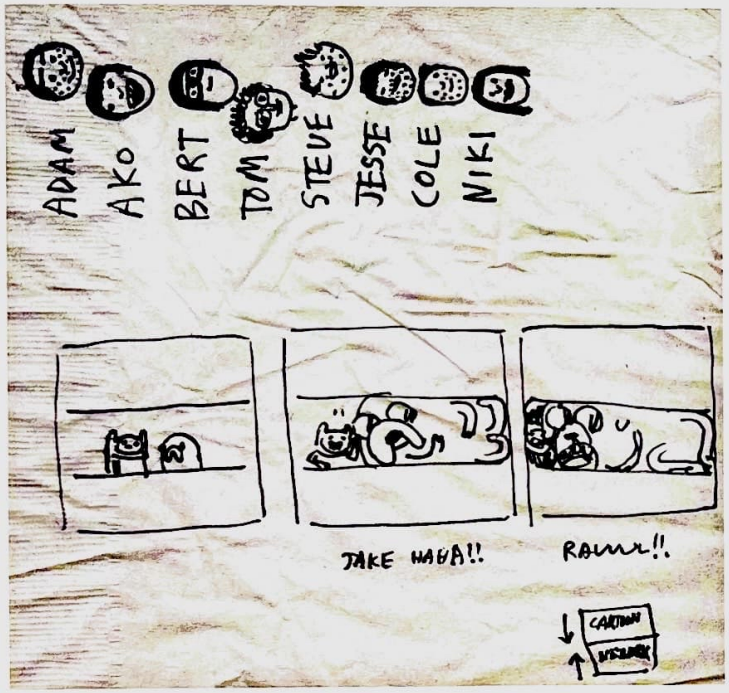
Thomas Herpich: It can be hard for me to turn away from the endless attention that the show gets online—I feel constitutionally, maybe even evolutionarily, ill-equipped to resist. I end up going for days at a time with my computer out of the house just to get my mind untangled.

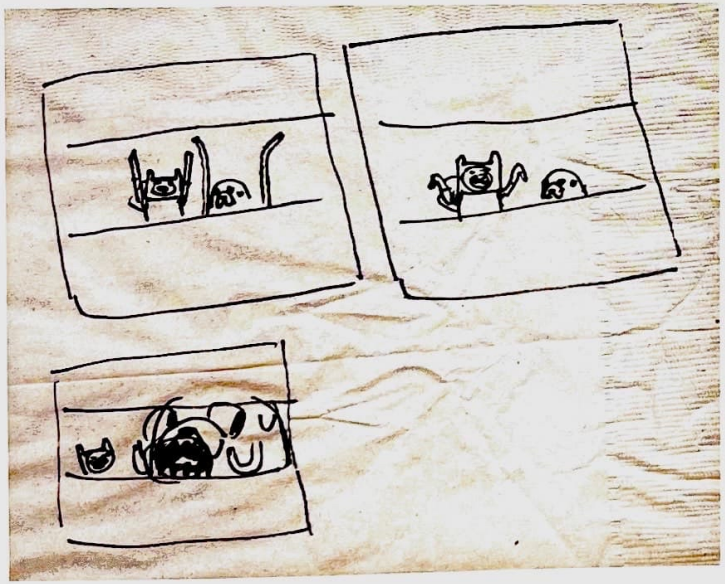
Mostly all the talk, though, the appreciation, the criticism, turns to white noise; there's so much of it, and so little context—maybe this is the haughty talk of a praise connoisseur, but knowing who's praising me is a big part of whether or not that praise is really affecting. Occasionally I still feel that deep spark of connection and gratitude, when I see that some stranger out there in the world really cared about, thought about, and paid attention to the work I've done. Success is great for your job security, and "great" for your ego, but to have the crystallized expression of your blood, sweat, and tears be really heard and understood is a lot more satisfying.

Writer Jack Pendarvis balances his perception of the occasionally extreme opinions found online with a thought experiment and face-to-face conversations.

Jack Pendarvis: The people who make Internet comments are obviously an important component of the fan-base, but I also think about the millions of people—I guess—who like the show just fine and never once write about it on the Internet at all. That's also an interesting choice! I end up having personal conversations about the show all the time. People feel genuinely connected to it. Their eyes light up. Whenever I'm at some literary event now, people want to talk about *Adventure Time* the most. The novelists and short-story writers love it, the grad students who go to literary events love it. (Though you will meet the occasional poet who "doesn't own a TV.") They want to drink beer and talk about what it means to them in person. I love talking about it because I love the show so much.

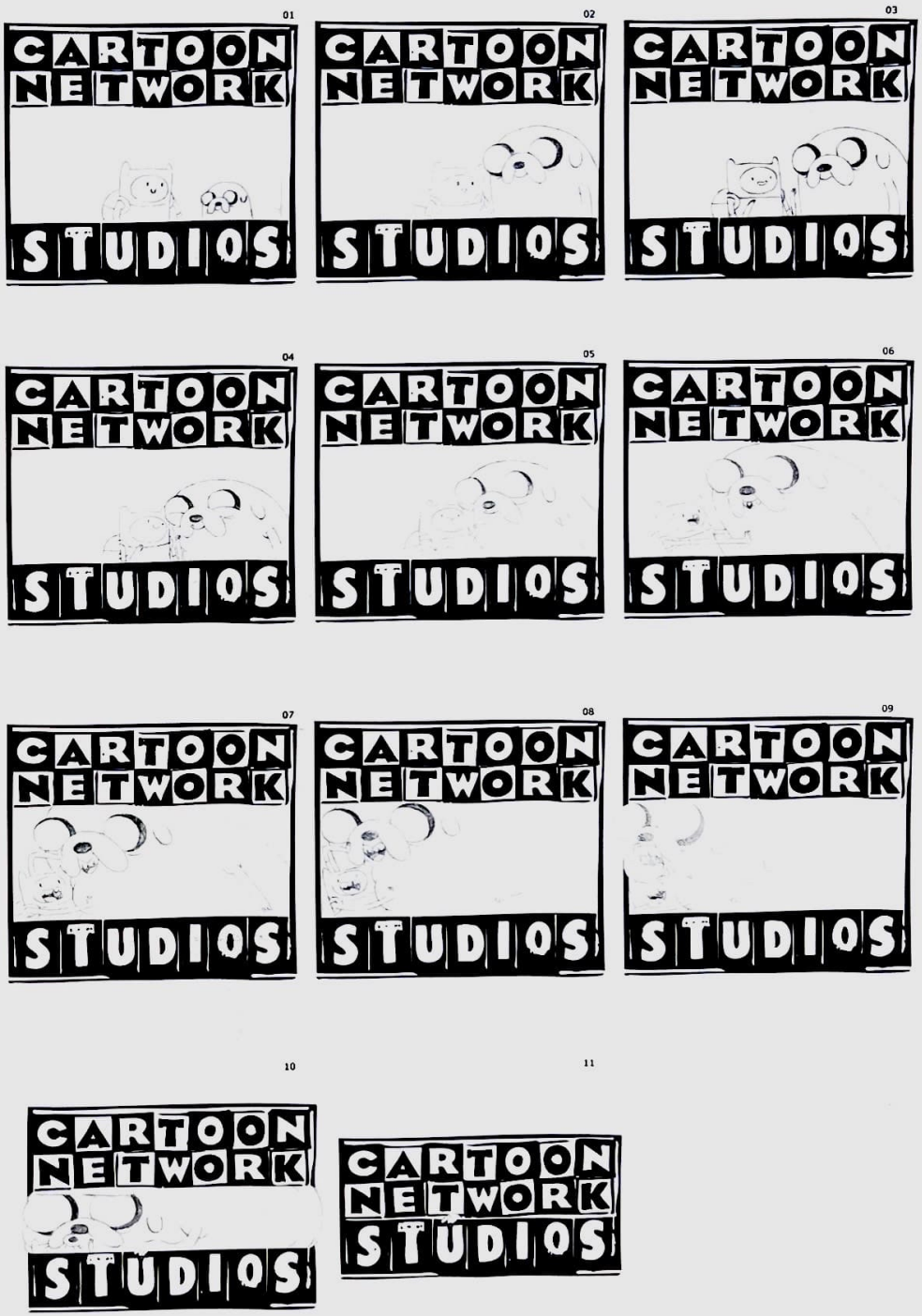
Indeed, at the core of every crew member's continuing motivation is the fact that they love what they are doing and appreciate the chance to work together collaboratively on a unique project that is experienced by so many. That—and the paycheck and benefits—more than makes up for any of the hardships involved—even including the occasional "This sucks."





Above: Concept sketches by Pen for the season one Cartoon Network Studios end tag.

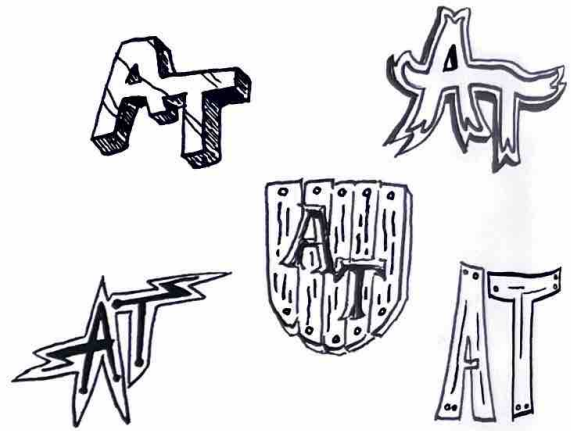
Right: Storyboards based on Pen's sketches by Adam Muto, who also animated the end tag.



LOGO DEVELOPMENT

ADVENTURE TIME. LOGO CONCEPTS ~ 02.11.09



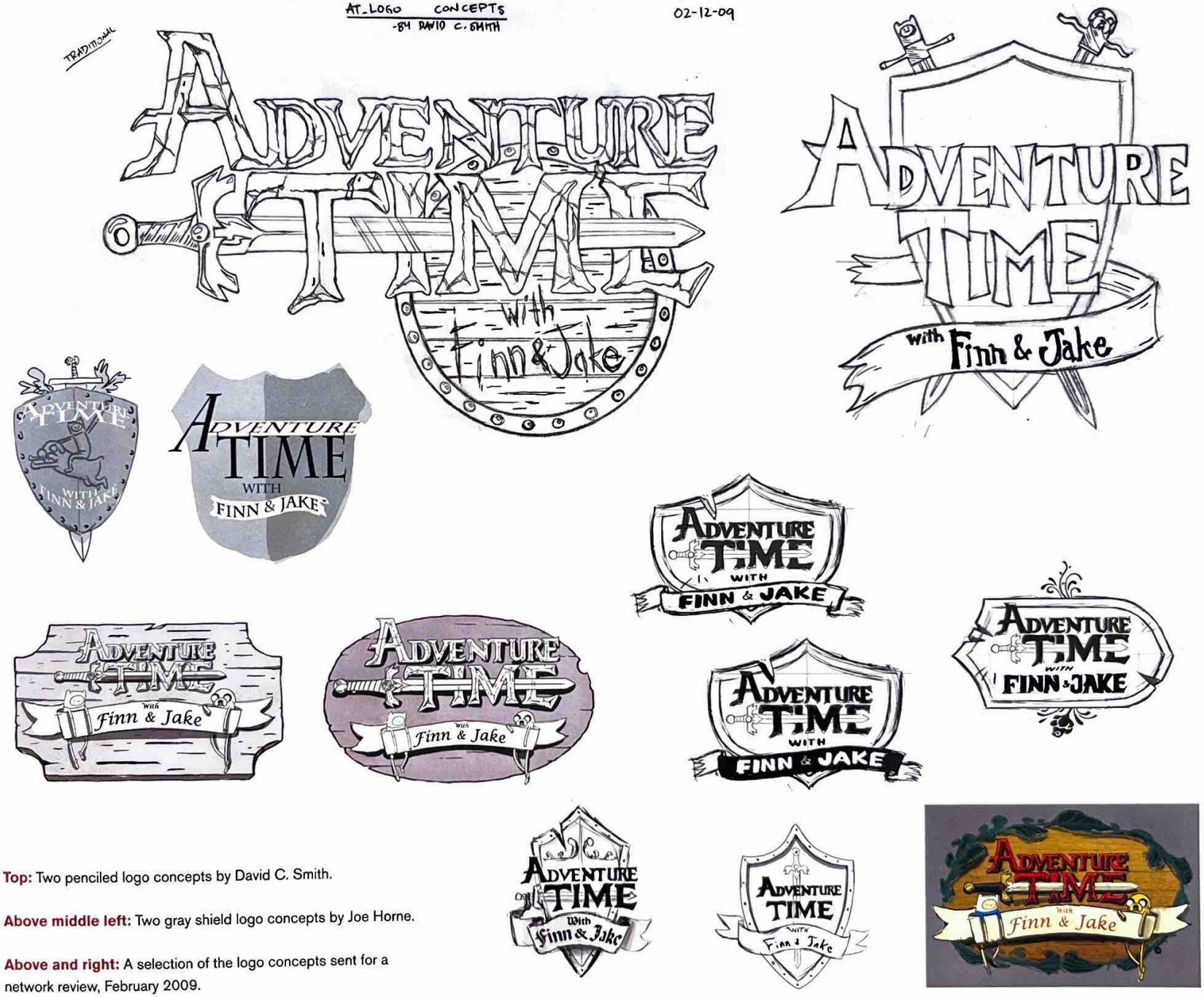


Adventure Time
Logo 04/01/09



Left and above top: Logo concepts by Adam Muto.

Above: Six of sixteen color variations on an *Adventure Time* logo concept design, April 2009.



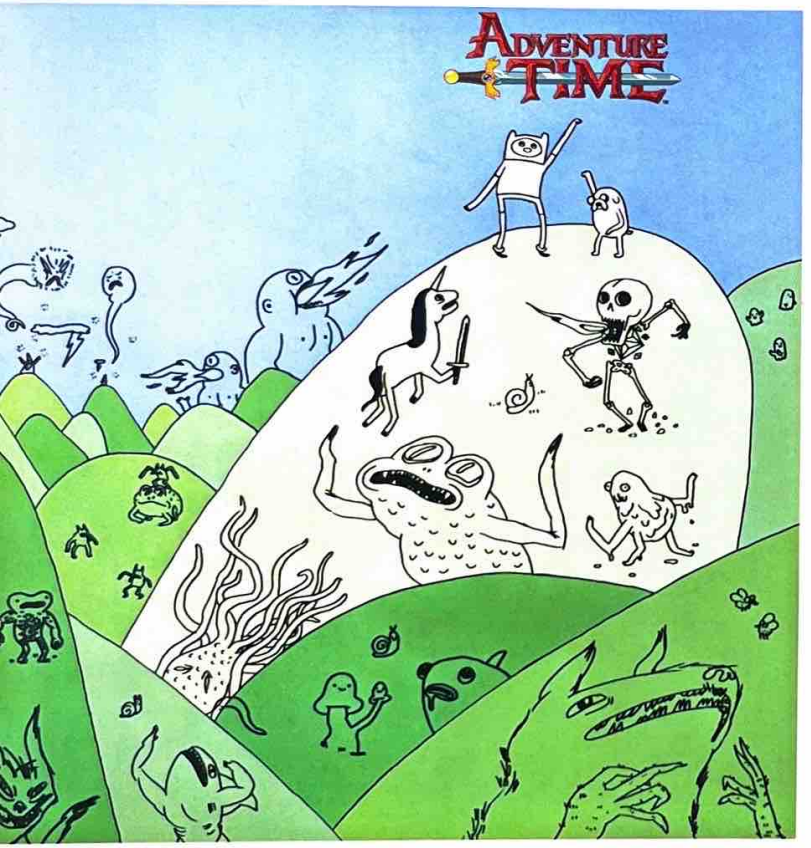
Top: Two penciled logo concepts by David C. Smith.

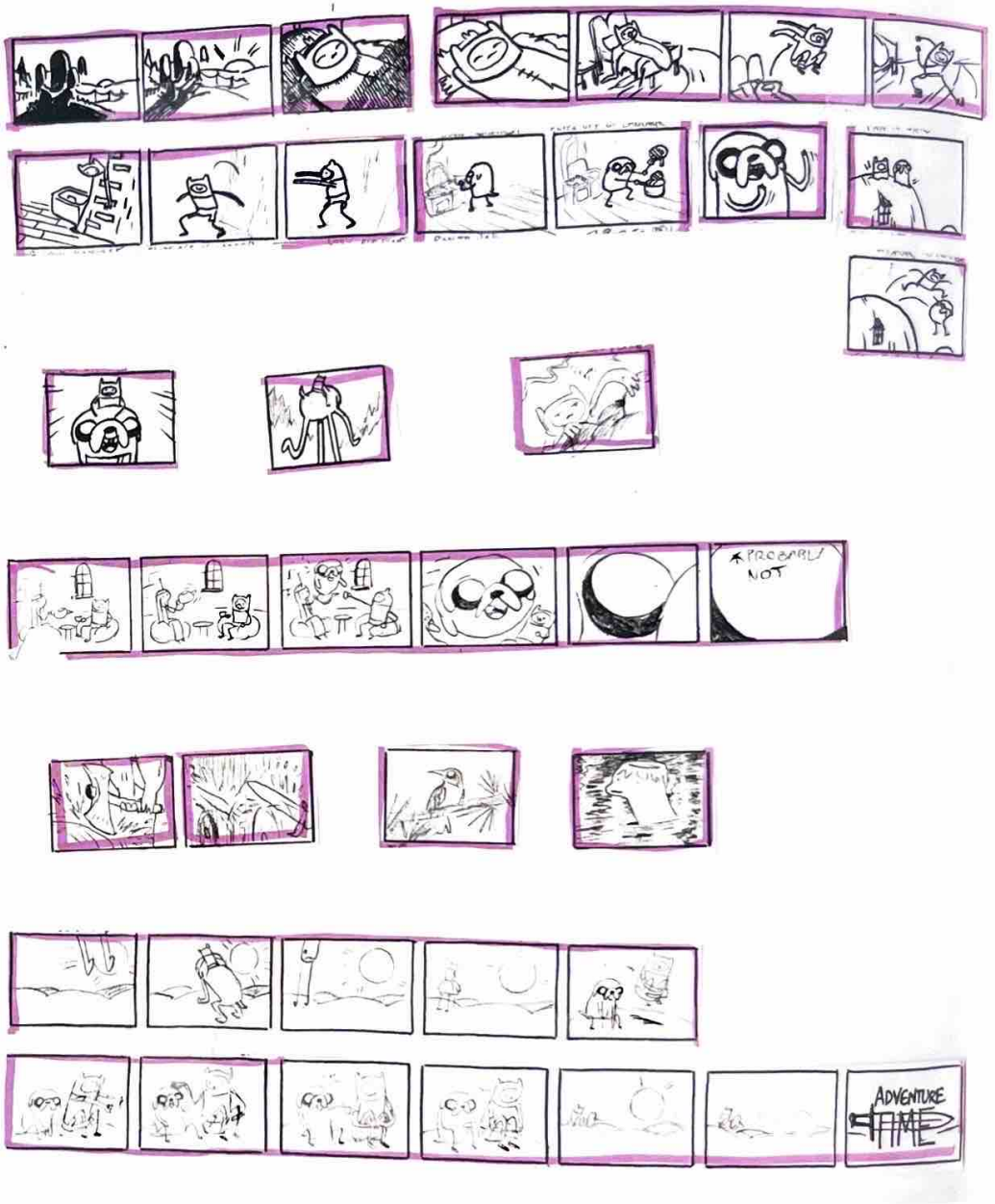
Above middle left: Two gray shield logo concepts by Joe Horne.

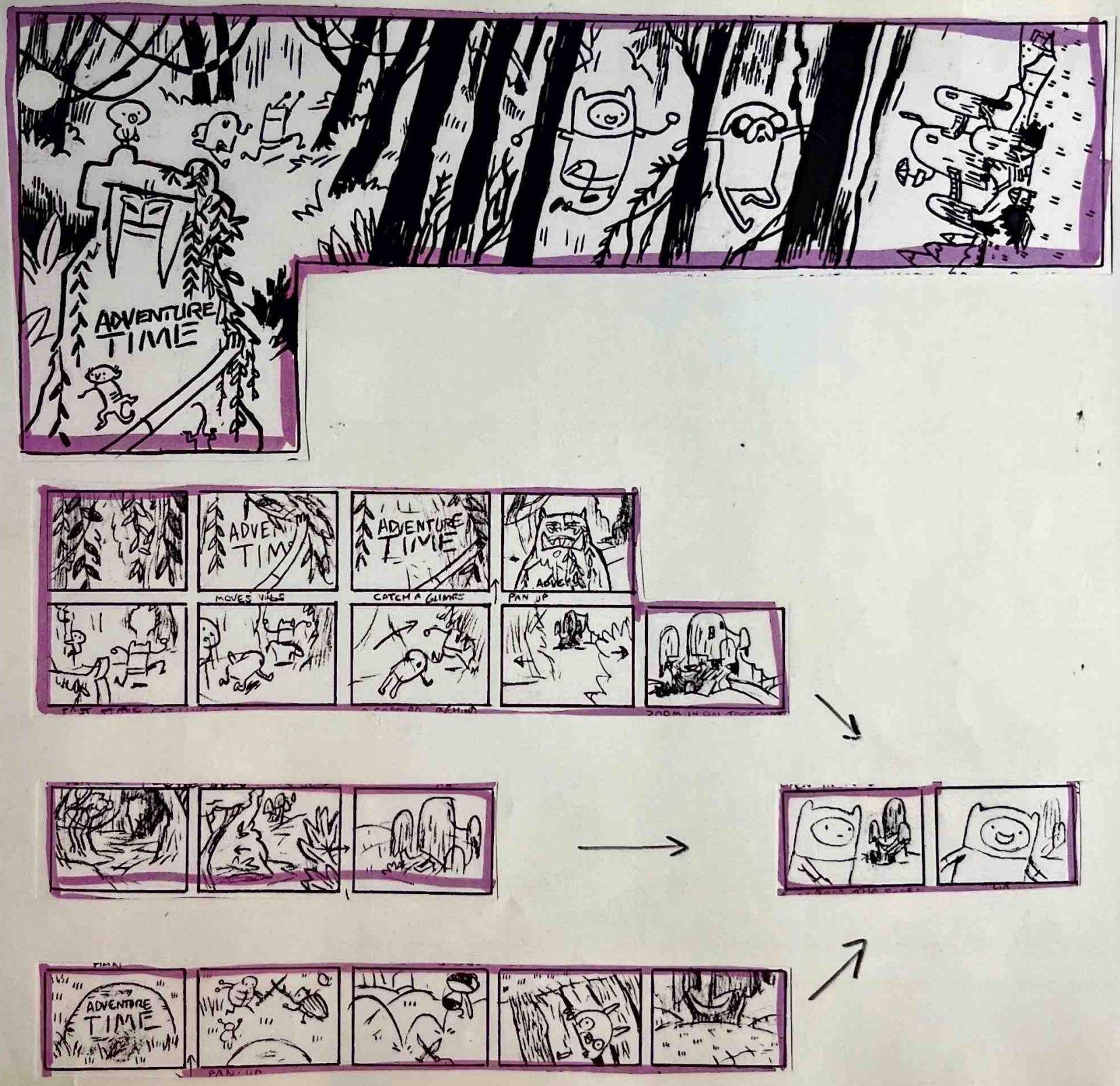
Above and right: A selection of the logo concepts sent for a network review, February 2009.

MAIN TITLE DEVELOPMENT

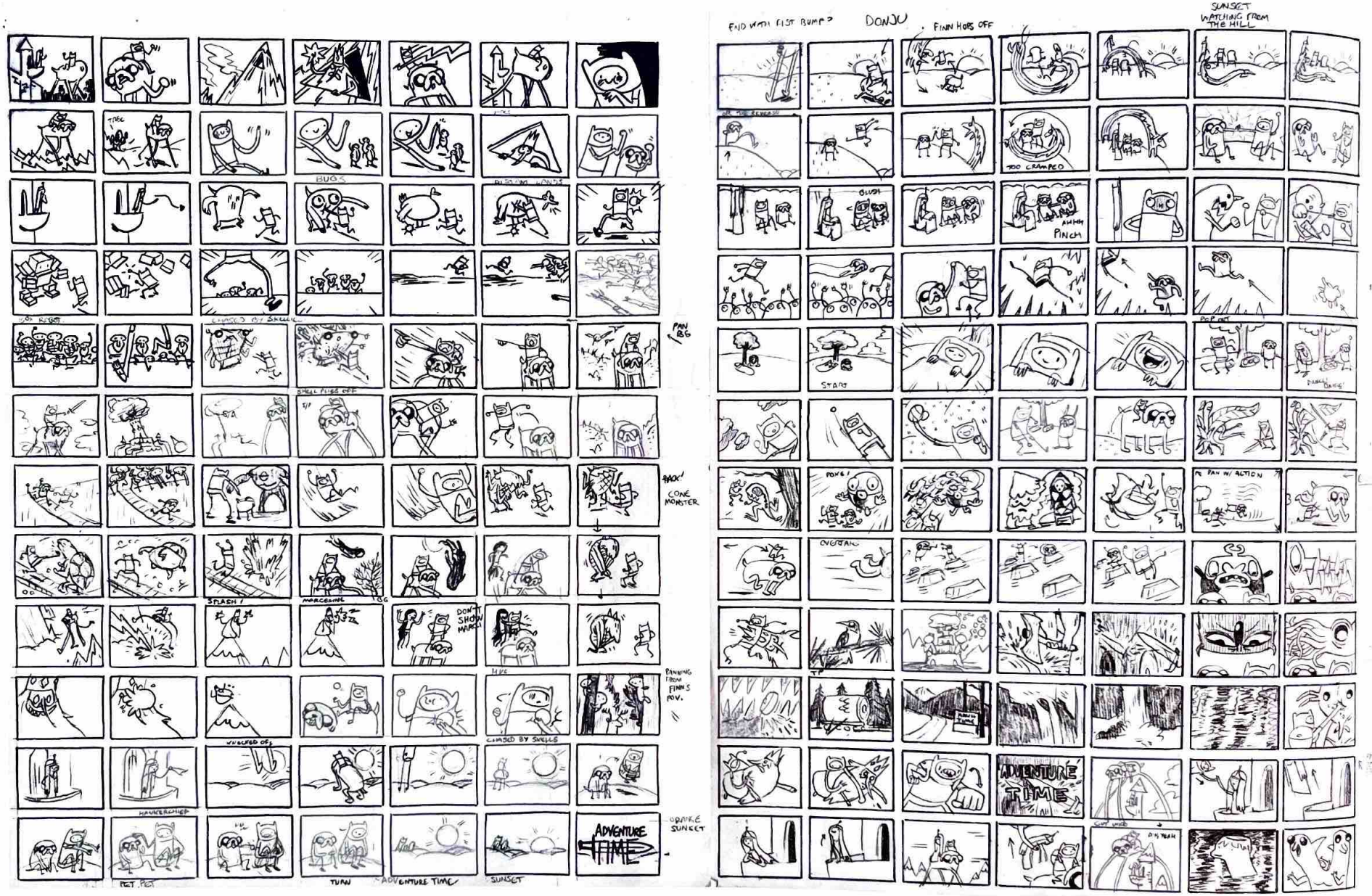
Completed just before the series premiere, the opening title sequence went through an exhaustive development before coalescing into the final version. Below, a concept drawing by Pen that related to an early version in which Finn and Jake run around punching monsters in rapid succession and everything ends in atomic-mushroom-cloud explosions. To the right and on the following spread are thumbnail storyboards by Adam Muto that he created to quickly work out ideas for the sequence. One idea that Pen wanted to explore was that Finn would punch a different character in each episode. Some of these thumbnails explore that concept. On the extra-tiny panel sizes, Adam says, "It seemed like a good idea at the time."





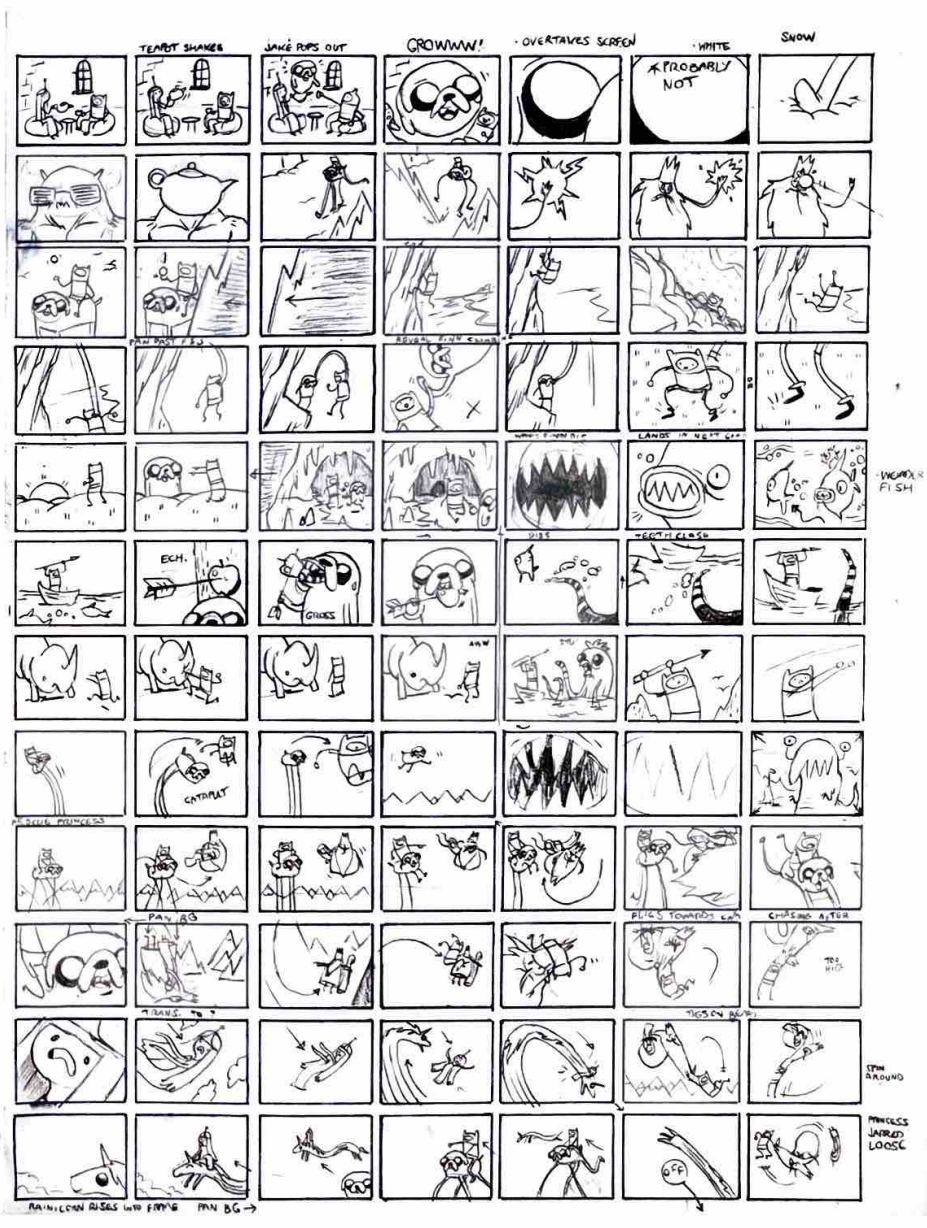

ADVENTURE TIME
ADVENTURE TIME
ADVENTURE TIME
MOVES VIBES
CATCH A GLIMPSE
PAN UP
ADVENTURE TIME
PAN UP

MAIN TITLE DEVELOPMENT

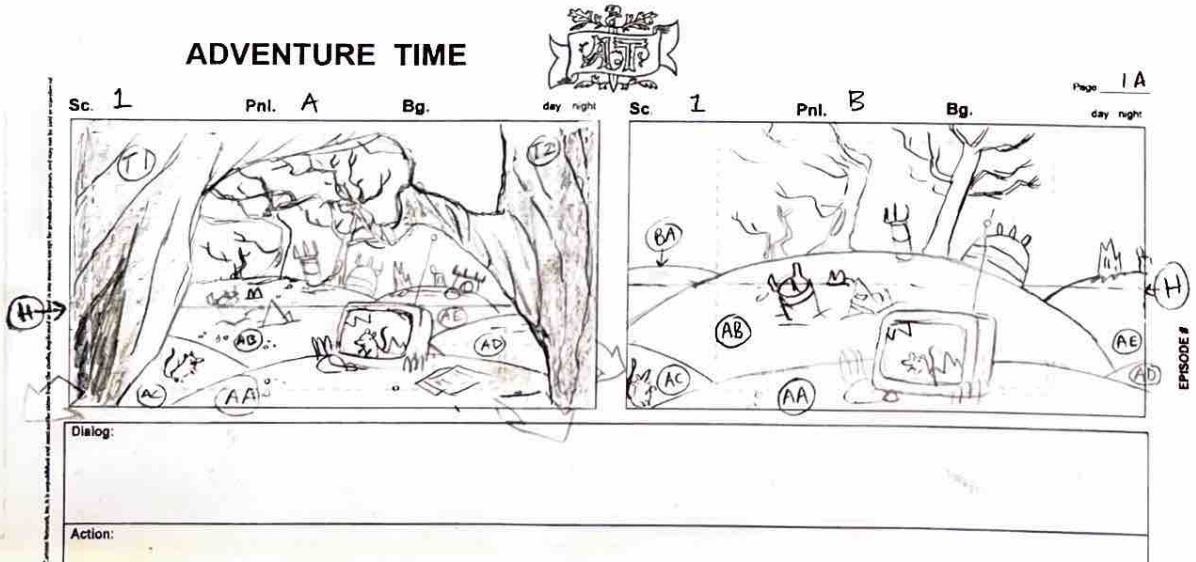


This spread: Continued thumbnail storyboards by Adam Muto for the main title sequence.


FINN P.O.V.
TOO LOW ACTION?
PAN W/ KING
FLASHBACK E 12 SHOTS
ADVENTURE TIME
PAN UP
PAN INC. CHARACTERS
MULTIPLE PLACEMENTS
PAN BG
WIPE
LEG WIPES SKULL
ZOOM IN ON TREEFORT
ZOOM IN ON DOOR
FINN COMES OUT OF DOOR
JAKE ENTERS
PAN W/ LOOK
BIG HANDS
HI FINN
CATCH UP TO JAKE
FOLLOW FALL
BOUNCES OFF WIRE
LANDS ON JAKE'S BACK
STRETCH O/S
HAVING TEA
CHEEZ - PULLS HIM INTO ANOTHER SCENE
STAIN OF ORCHARD SCENE


TENT SHAKES
JAKE POPS OUT
GROWWW!
OVERTAKES SCREEN
WHITE
SNOW
*PROBABLY NOT
ECH.
CATAPULT
PAN BG
PLIES TOWARDS CAM
CHASING AFTER
SPIN AROUND
PRINCESS JARRED LOOSE
RAINICORN RISES INTO FRAME
PAN BG →

MAIN TITLE DEVELOPMENT



This page: Background artwork and storyboard panels from the main title sequence in which the camera rapidly moves through a variety of Ooo landscapes until coming to rest on Finn and Jake in their tree house, where they share an epic fist pound. Layout storyboards of the main title sequence by Marco Cinello.

Opposite top: Background artwork from the same sequence, with a sample piece of character art placed to illustrate the special shadow coloring.

Opposite bottom: A storyboard panel and the background art from the final scene of the same sequence, inspired by the fantasy artwork of Frank Frazetta.




ADVENTURE TIME
CREATED BY PENDLETON WARD




TALKING
ABOUT
DND
TOM



This spread: Napkin drawings of the crew, by the crew. Armen Mirzaian, featured subject on many napkins and an integral part of the season one storyboard crew, died in 2013 in a car accident. He was memorialized at the end of the season five episode, "Shhh!," with the above graphic.




ALL GLOB'S CREATURES



Opposite: Holiday card artwork by Phil Rynda, 2010.

Right: A personal drawing of *Adventure Time*, to *Adventure Time*, by storyboard artist Ako Castuera.

In the Land of Ooo, the main setting of *Adventure Time*, kingdoms, forests, and deadly dungeons ooze with life. New forms of creatures are revealed every episode in the series's perpetually expanding world. There are candy people, grass trolls, sentient mountains, vampires, hug wolves, why wolves, a levitating wolf head Party God, cloud people, Beneathaverse gnomes, bikini babes, a large selection of wizards, and demons from the Nightosphere—just a few examples of Ooo's biological diversity. Perhaps one of the most unique beings in Ooo is Finn, believed to be the last remaining human.

Finn the human is a young boy full of energy and enthusiasm. Beyond mere adventure, Finn seeks to be a righteous hero and to right every wrong that he encounters. Finn will rescue any princess in distress, whether he likes their thank-you kisses (Princess Bubblegum) or cringes at the thought (Slime Princess, Hot Dog Princess). He also enjoys ice cream, video games, beatboxing jam sessions, and hanging out with friends.

Basic Finn fashion consists of blue shorts and shirt, two-tone green backpack, and a white bear-eared hat with full head coverage excluding an oval face-hole. The first time that Finn's hat came off in an episode, his massively long blond locks were revealed. Since then, he has also sported a buzz cut, a shoulder-length cut, and on one occasion, a dyed brown male-pattern-baldness cut. (And that doesn't even include the fashion styles from his alternate timelines or past lives.) Finn often wields a sword, which he occasionally upgrades throughout the series from his standard model, to a twisted wooden-hilt model, to one made out of demon Kee Oth's coagulated blood (it's a family heirloom), to a cursed blade of grass that attaches itself to his arm and deploys from bracelet to sword form at will.

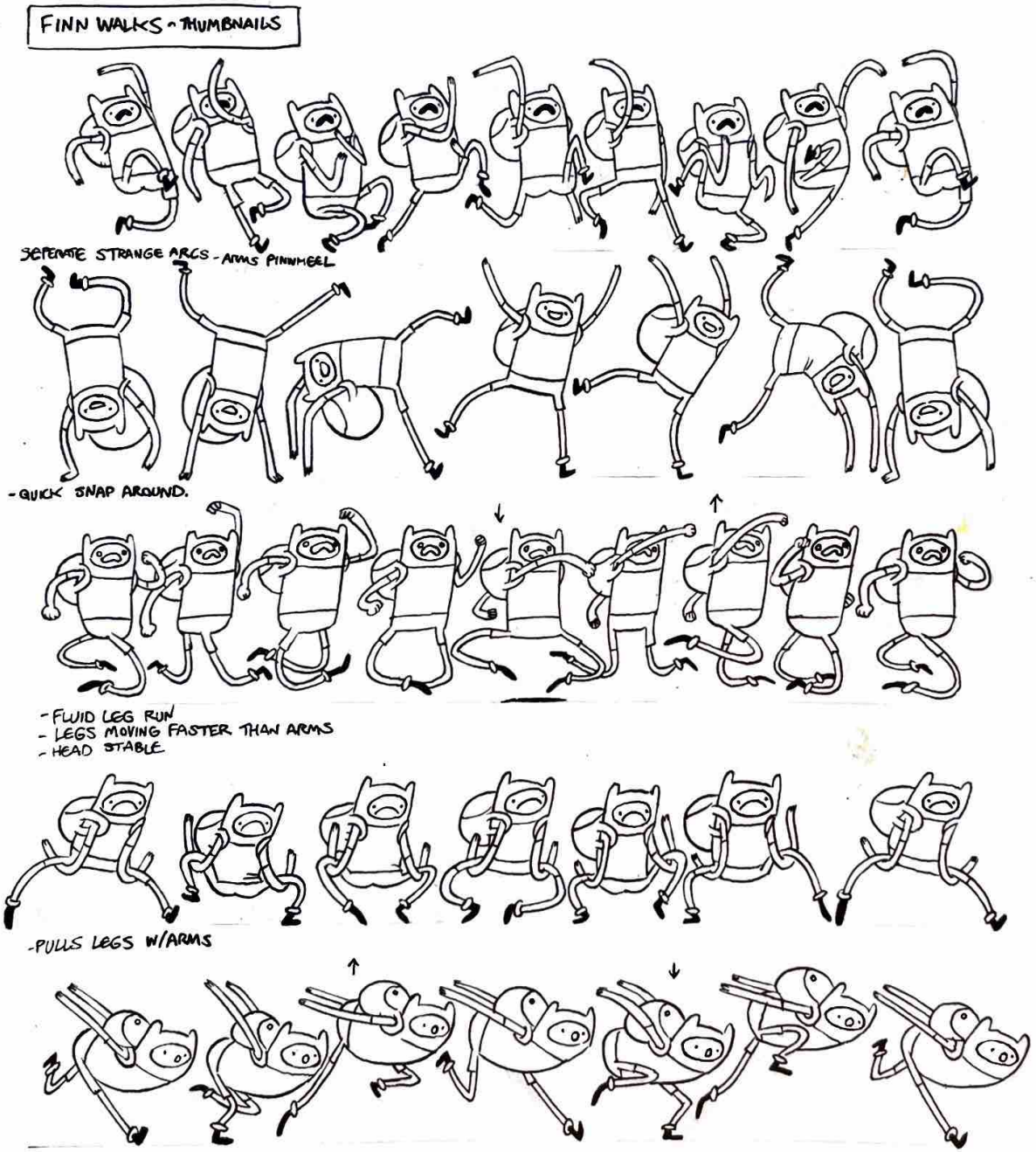
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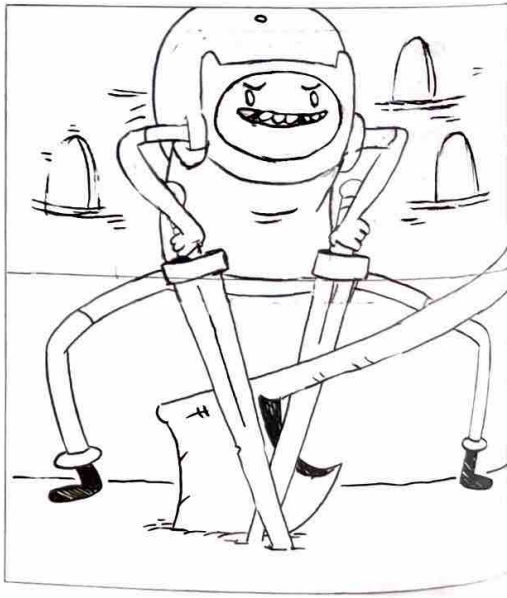
FINN THE HUMAN

Finn is the hero of *Adventure Time*. Generally thought to be one of the last humans left on Ooo, Finn lives and adventures beside his best friend, Jake the shape-shifting dog, in a world of mutants and magical monsters.







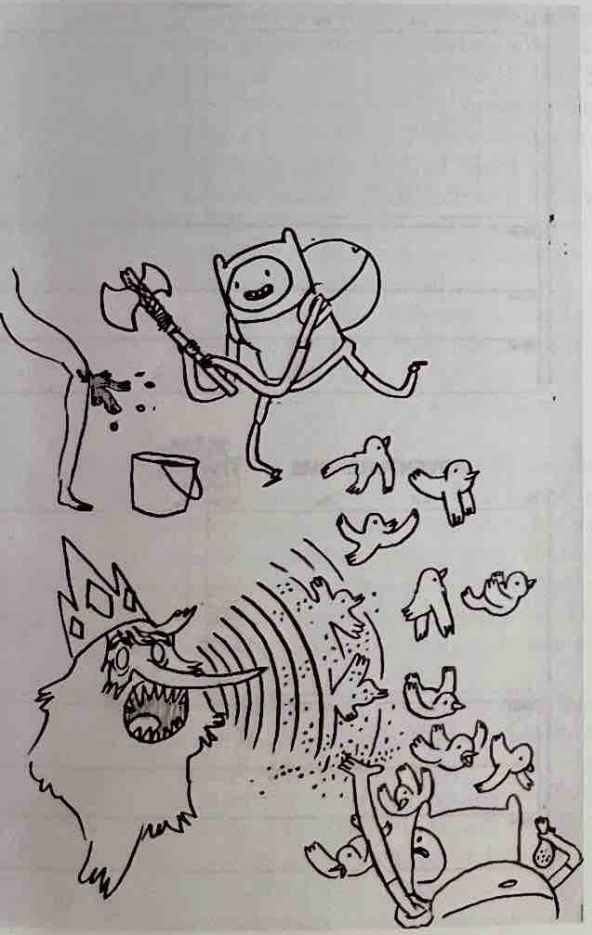


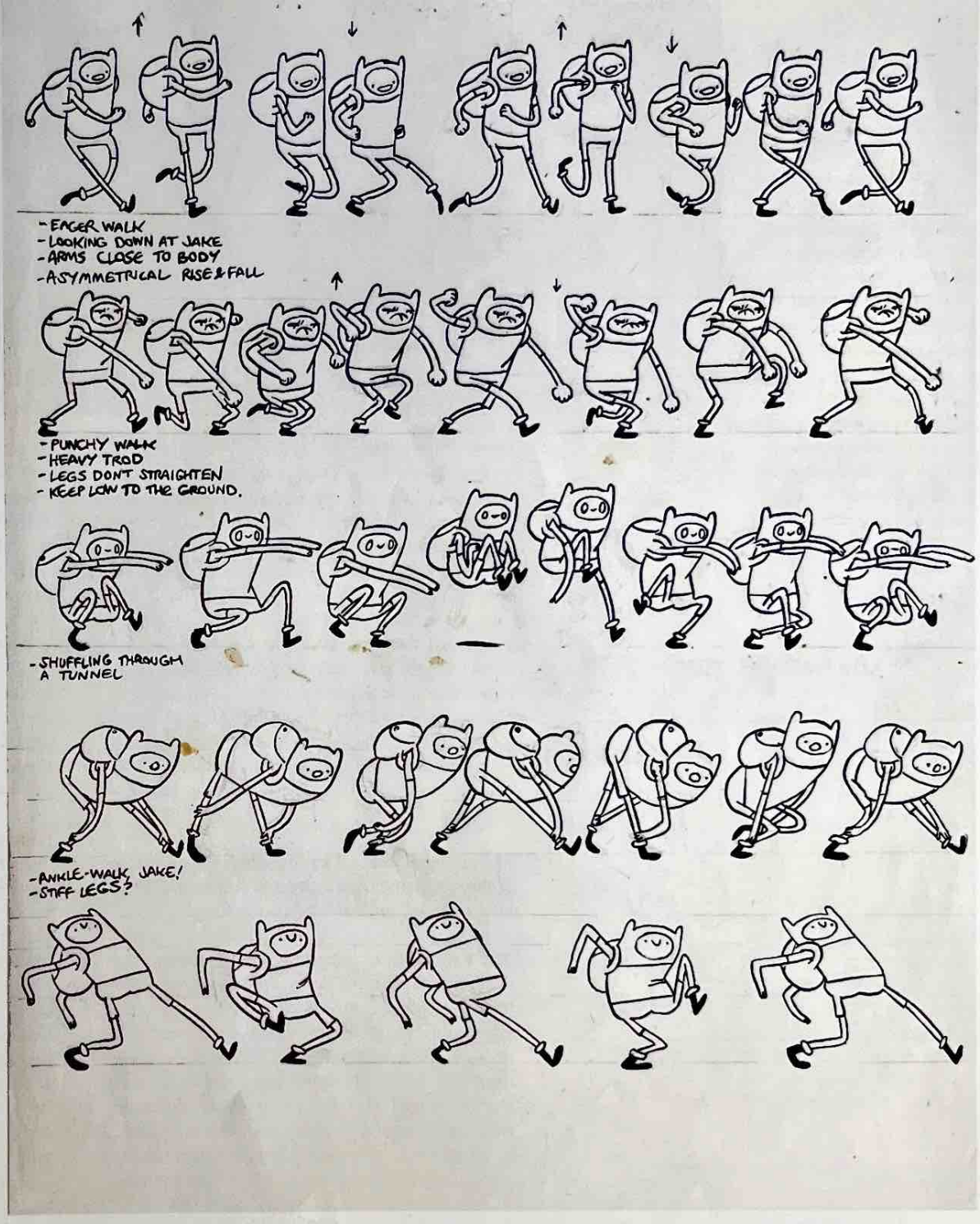
Opposite left and right: A study of Finn-specific walk cycles by Adam Muto as part of his season one explorations into Finn's character.

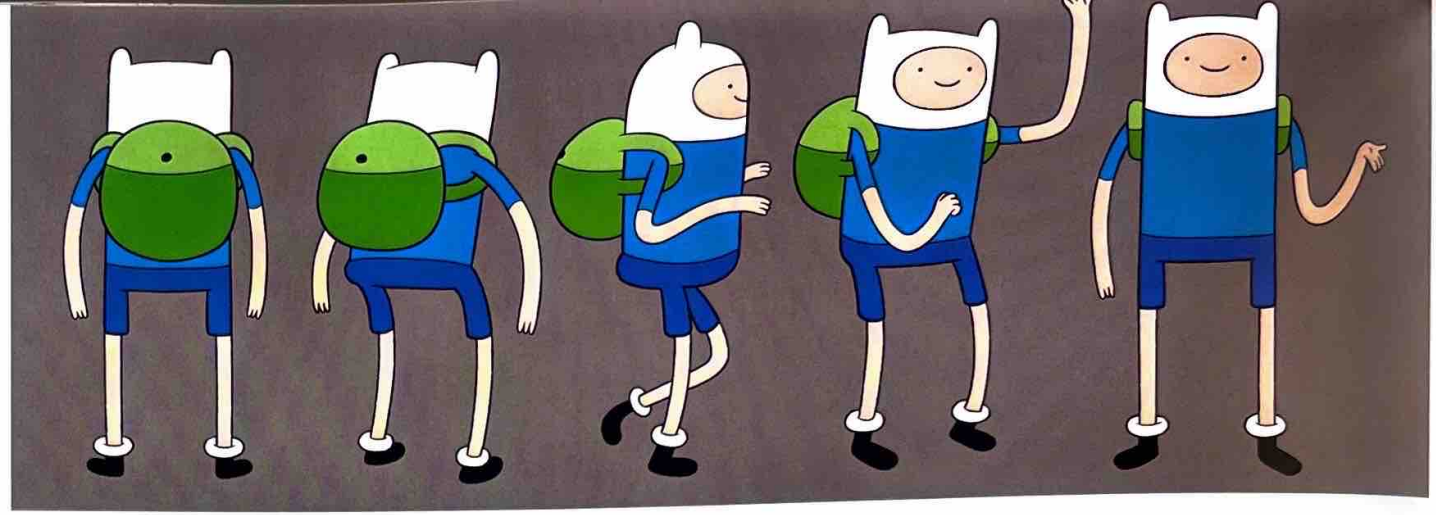
Opposite right top: Finn has many skills. Here, Finn is in the process of rap-battling Rap Bear in the episode "Billy's Bucket List."

Opposite right bottom: Drawings cut from a storyboard featuring the ghostly gladiators and fightin' Finn from "Morituri Te Salutamus." (Top drawing by Rebecca Sugar, bottom by Adam Muto.)

Below: Axe-wielding Finn and Ice King by Pen.

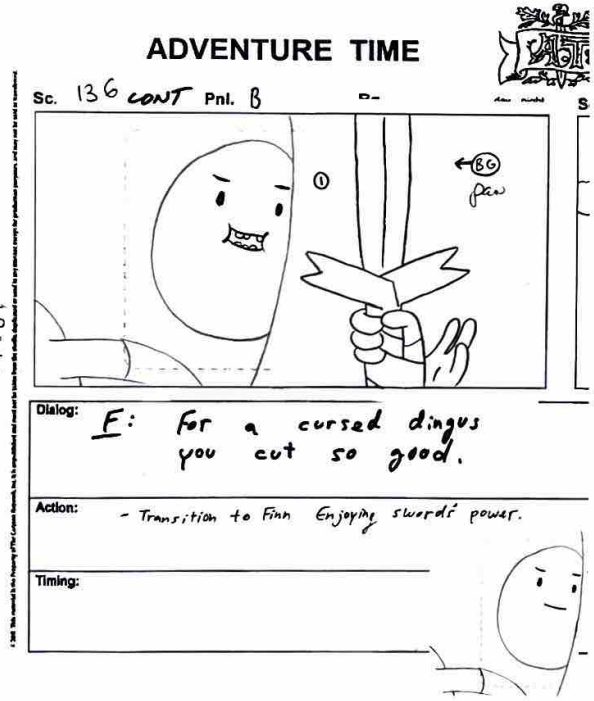






Right: A turn-around lineup of the basic Finn model.

Below: A storyboard panel from the episode "Blade of Grass," in which Finn's broken demon blood sword is replaced with a fateful purchase of a wizard-cursed grass-blade sword. The new sword wraps itself around Finn's wrist and can't be removed. On the upside, it deploys from bracelet form to fullly extended sword at will, and it cuts with cursed precision. This episode was storyboarded by Somvilay Xayaphone and Seo Kim.



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(Continued from page 75)

Finn lives roughly 1,000 years after the Great Mushroom War that wasted Earth away under a mutagenic blanket of destruction (and left a colossal chunk missing from the globe). Hence, the iconic design of Finn's face isn't necessarily just a cartooning style choice.

Pen Ward: Everything on Ooo is irradiated and mutated from the war. That's why there is magic, that's why Princess Bubblegum is made out of gum, and that's why Finn has little black dots for eyes. They're all mutants. But I also drew those dot eyes because I thought they were cute. Simple, minimal features appealed to me . . . 'cause they were cute, and I like cute-lookin' stuff.

The design vocabulary that drove the development of the world of Ooo is a direct descendant of Pen's earlier *Bueno the Bear*–style cartooning.

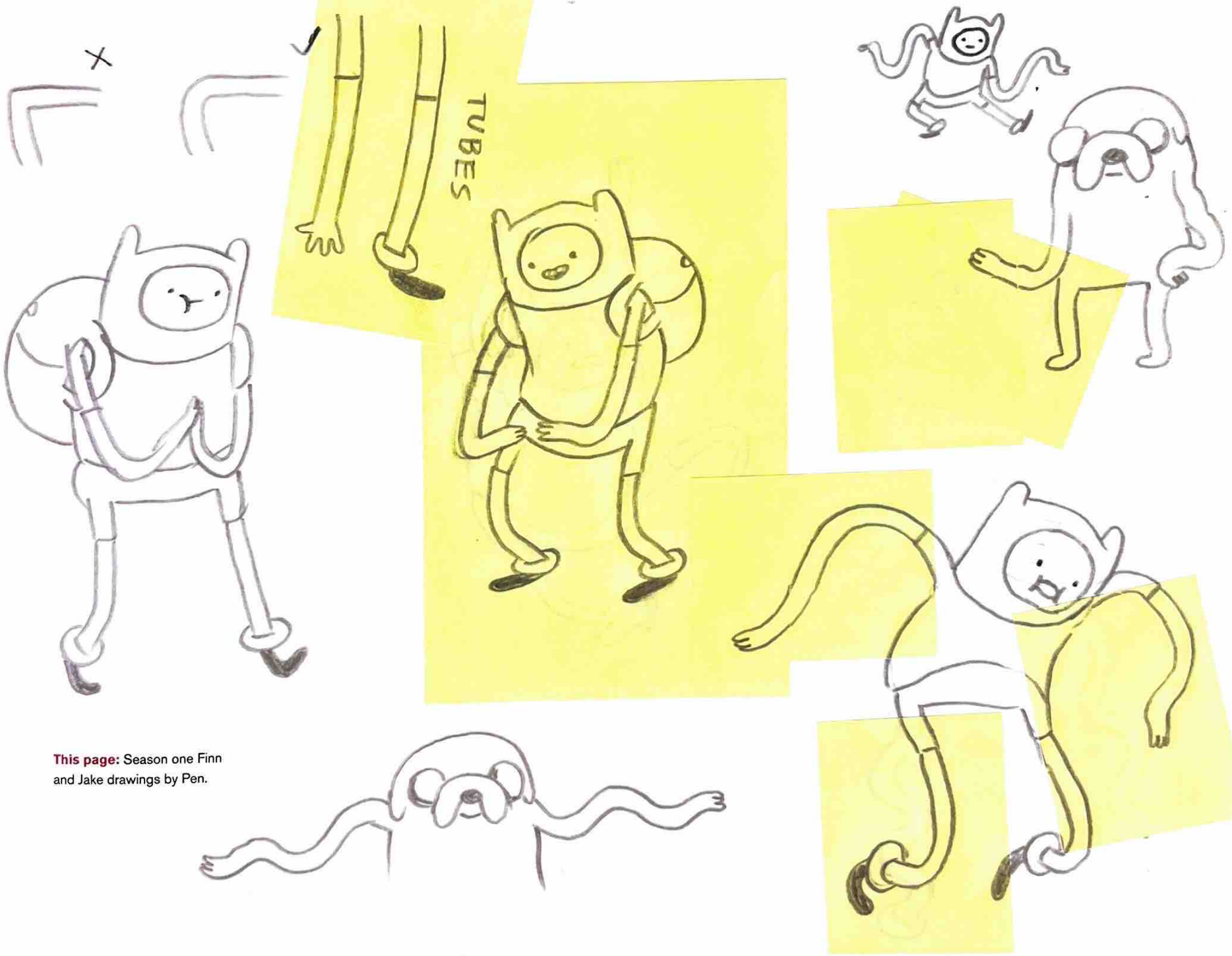
Phil Rynda: It's an interesting theory that the "two dots for eyes, one line for mouth" design makes the viewer identify more strongly with a character. *Especially* if the viewer is also missing his or her nose. . . . But in all seriousness, I think the major benefit of the "classic smiley-face" idea is that our characters are boiled down to an extremely iconic representation of attitude and expression. It also gives us a *huge* range of emotion we can explore, without being bogged down by detail. It's pure cartooning.

Author and comic artist Scott McCloud popularized this discussion of the universal power of the iconic smiley face and other cartooning theories in his 1993 book, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art.* McCloud writes that viewers see *another* when looking at a photo or realistic drawing of a face with many specific details, but when viewing a cartoon, the "cartoon is a vacuum into which our identity and awareness are pulled . . . an empty shell that we inhabit which enables us to travel in another realm. We don't just observe the cartoon, we become it!" The book has since been used as a reference in many art-school comic and animation curricula, and its theories are generally part of the vernacular among animation professionals.

[Designer and storyboard artist] Andy Ristaino: I think the beautiful thing about the iconic *Adventure Time* face is that by having these few parameters set up for the look of everything, it allows you to really play around with the designs of new characters. You can create something totally bonkers-looking, but if it has that iconic face, it still fits into the universe.

[Storyboard artist] Rebecca Sugar: I always thought the show was brilliant because the characters look so simple and unassuming, and there's nothing in the world I love more than a cartoon character going through something really *real*, just doubling in on itself feeling a real person's feelings. People don't expect depth from cartoons, which is a shame but

(Continued on page 83)

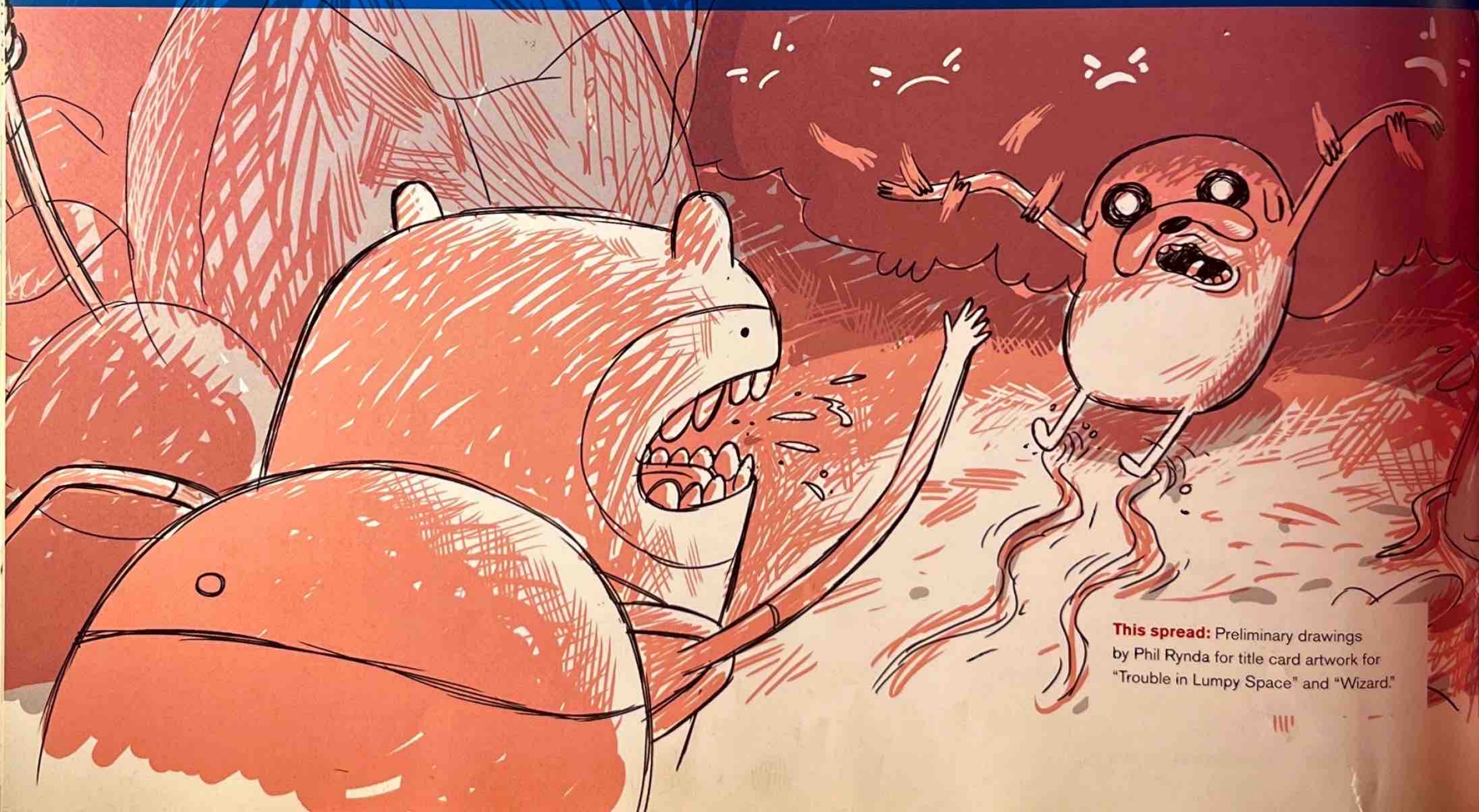


This page: Season one Finn and Jake drawings by Pen.

Voicing Finn: JEREMY SHADA

Jeremy Shada, voice of Finn, on acting, performing voice-overs, and his older brother's performance as Pen (Finn) in the original short: I've been acting since I was six years old. I've always liked being able to do a variety of acting and have done voice-over and on-camera since I started. They're both so fun and unique, and I'm really glad to be able to do both! I was very young when Zack did the short, but the one thing I do remember was how bizarre I thought it was! That's why I loved watching it! I also remember being so impressed with how talented my brother is. He is an amazing actor.

On Finn's developing character: I think it's great watching Finn grow up and mature! It's definitely the kind of role you want as an actor because it's so much more interesting and challenging to have your character go through arcs and different trials and come out of them changed in so many ways but still be the same person underneath and still have the same spirit of the character as they get older. I love being able to grow up alongside the character and see him go from this fun, happy kid who just wants to adventure and fight evil with his best friend, to being a real hero who always tries to do the right thing, even when it gets harder and harder to discern what that is. Which is why Finn is such a relatable character for me, as well as the audience . . . I relate to Finn because I'm always trying do the right thing, but sometimes it's hard to know what that is and you make mistakes and have to learn from those mistakes and mature. And of course I relate to Finn's lack of math skills!



This spread: Preliminary drawings by Phil Rynda for title card artwork for "Trouble in Lumpy Space" and "Wizard."

On singing as Finn, and the funny occasional use of auto-tune processing: I've actually been a singer almost my whole life, and singing on *Adventure Time* is challenging and fun because my singing style in real life is different from Finn's. In *Adventure Time*, when I sing as Finn, not only am I singing in Finn's voice, but I'm also singing very raw and emotional because Finn is coming up with the lyrics on the spot as he sings the words he's feeling in his heart. So it's supposed to sound very real and untrained. But in real life I sing in my normal range, and it's far more seasoned. I love when Finn sings with the auto-tune sound! Actually, I think the auto-tuned baby song (not to be confused with the fan favorite baby Finn song) was the very first song I ever recorded on *Adventure Time*! It was such a blast! It's one of my favorites!

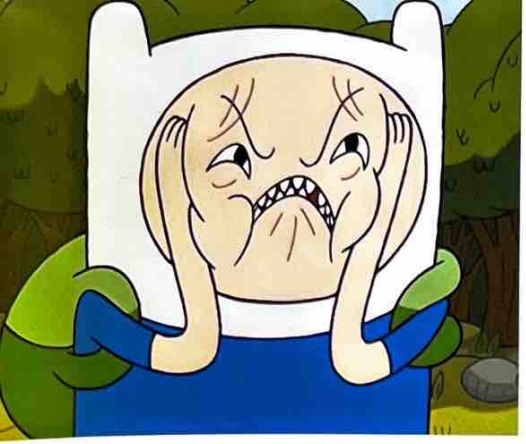
On looking five to ten years into *Adventure Time*'s future: Well, I hope we're still doing *Adventure Time* ten years from now! It's definitely a show that could go that long because there's really a never-ending amount of directions to go and stories to tell in Ooo! I personally think Finn has some great character arching to do and I'd love to see Finn go through his later teens and early adult years! At the very least I want him to finally end up with at least one princess!



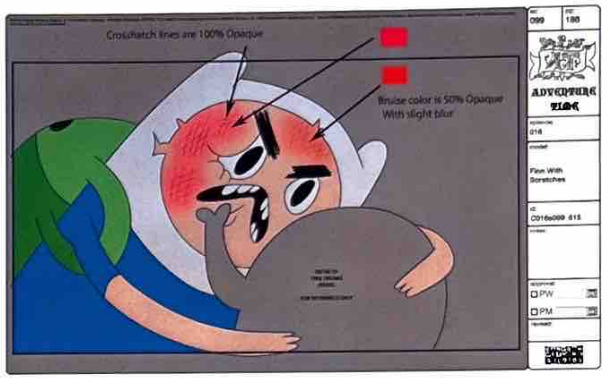


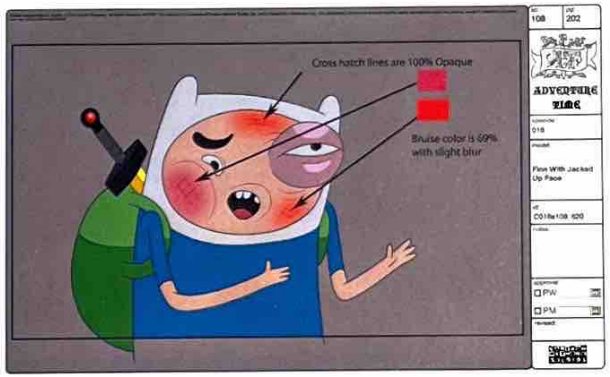
This page: Promotional artwork by Phil Rynda.

Opposite: Special-pose models and screen grabs from season one episodes "The Enchiridion!" and "Tree Trunks" that feature Finn with eye whites.









(Continued from page 78)

also an advantage, because if you do put it in there it will catch people by surprise and create this awesome friction of the message against the medium. The *Adventure Time* designs are so smart, because their simplicity makes you project yourself onto these characters when you choose to believe they look like people. So at that point when they're doing something really specific and intense, like Princess Bubblegum beating up Ricardio [the Heart Guy], I'd like to think that's kinda happening in reverse—everything I'm putting into Bubblegum, a bunch of complicated rage, going up through your projection you're putting onto that character into your brain, "here feel this rrrrghhhhh! How about you feel like THISSSSS!!!"

An untrained eye may just see the apparent simplicity of the design components, such as dot eyes or rubber hose–style limbs, but a refined set of principles inform the construction and proper use of each of them. Phil Rynda, the lead character designer for much of the development and the early seasons of the show, produced guides of this material for the crew.

Phil Rynda: When Pen, Pat, and I started talking about the design of these characters, we very consciously wanted to design something iconic that any kid could draw and identify with. Pen's natural aesthetic is full of big, iconic statements, so we wanted to keep in line with that and attempt to refine those ideas in a repeatable way. We also wanted to design characters that all of the board artists could draw and make their own. We wanted the flexibility of simple design, but with the specificity that simplification granted us.

In terms of nuance, Finn's eyes are unusually spread apart, and his mouth is very high. If you look at your drawing and see that there is room for a nose, you may want to rethink Finn's mouth placement.

For me, the biggest revelation came from being able to slide Finn's face around within the circle of his hat. Finn could look any direction without needing to turn his head. I had to basically rewire my brain to make sense of this idea, but it proved to be one of the most useful tools.

Finn's face was also the source of a first-season change in design direction.

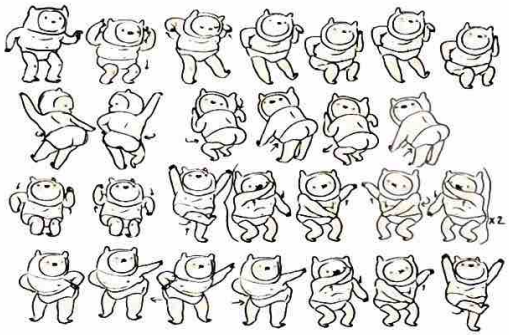
Pat McHale: When we started designing the series, we tried to keep the good things about the original short and improve on it. One of the sweetest moments of the short is when "Pen" gets kissed by Princess Bubblegum and his eyes are all wide. At first it seemed like it would be good to keep that spirit alive in the show . . . but once you go down the road of eye whites, it's hard to rein it in. It's so much easier to do subtle expressions if you have eye whites to work with . . . but it started looking weird. It didn't feel like the show.

Phil Rynda: Pen would cringe whenever he saw those eyes on-screen.

Pen Ward: My reasoning was that having Finn's eyes bulge out with sclera [the white part of the eye] made him more of a cartoon character, when I wanted Finn to feel real and be relatable. So the rule after the first









Above top and middle: Baby Finn doing the "buff baby" song and dance in "Memory of a Memory," with poses drawn by Natasha Allegri.

Above bottom: A vision of Finn and Jake's dad, Joshua, with his arm around their brother, Jermaine, from the episode "Crystals Have Power."

Above right: Joshua and Margaret discover stinky baby Finn in "Memories of Boom Boom Mountain."



season was, characters can be born with sclera or none at all, but they can't switch back and forth between the two . . . to maintain their "realness."

I was proud that we made this new global rule so late in production, because it created another rule, which is that the show can change if we come up with something better. . . . We can make the show better as we go along.

Pat McHale: So when we [started working without the] eye whites, it was hard because we wanted to retain the same expressions, but without the circle around the eye. We had less to work with, and the eyes couldn't give you the same subtlety. So we started getting creative with adding choice lines around and under Finn's eyes to get the appropriate expression.

Finn and the other characters still retain the flexibility to do "special takes"—specific, unusual facial expressions—when appropriate.

Pat McHale: "Special take" expressions just develop from board artists trying to portray a very specific feeling. If it's on-character, and if it makes sense sequentially in the story and is funny or emotional . . . it can usually work. Too many zany expressions kill the realism of the characters, though, so that's why we don't have tons of crazy expressions all the time.

Jake the Dog is Finn's best friend, roommate, and older brother. Jake's parents, Joshua and Margaret, first encountered baby Finn while they were walking through the forest. Finn was a soiled, sobbing infant with a large leaf stuck to his bottom, adhered with "boom boom." Taking pity on the baby, Jake's parents adopted Finn, adding him to their family of two sons, Jake and Jermaine. Not much is known about the subsequent handful of years—outside of Finn's "buff baby" song and dance number first seen in "Memory of a Memory"—but ultimately by the time we join the *Adventure Time* story line, Joshua and Margaret have passed on, and Jermaine is alive, but his whereabouts yet unrevealed. Which leaves Finn and Jake.

Jake can get riled up for any adventure, and he'll stand side by side with Finn when it comes to battling any evil or righting any wrong . . . in general. Sometimes Jake's laziness gets the better of him, and Finn needs to battle solo. Jake likes cooking, playing the viola, and visiting his girlfriend Lady Rainicorn, as well as all the same things that Finn likes; they're great pals. What sets Jake apart is that while Finn is a boy, Jake is in his late twenties, and has more experience (and secrets) to show for it. Pen described their relationship to the season one crew: "He's always razzing his young pal but counseling him at the same time." Call it the *Meatballs* model; the performance Pen was referencing for Jake was Bill Murray's camp counselor in the 1979 film *Meatballs*.

(Continued on page 91)



This page: Baby Finn concept drawings by Phil Rynda, along with the lyrics to the "buff baby" song.

I'm a buff baby that can dance like a man,
I can shake-a my fanny, I can shake-a my can!
I'm a tough tootin' baby, I can punch-a your buns!
Punch-a your buns, I can punch all your buns!
If you're an evil witch, I will punch you for fun!


This spread:
A small selection of adventures from Finn's life in Ooo and beyond.

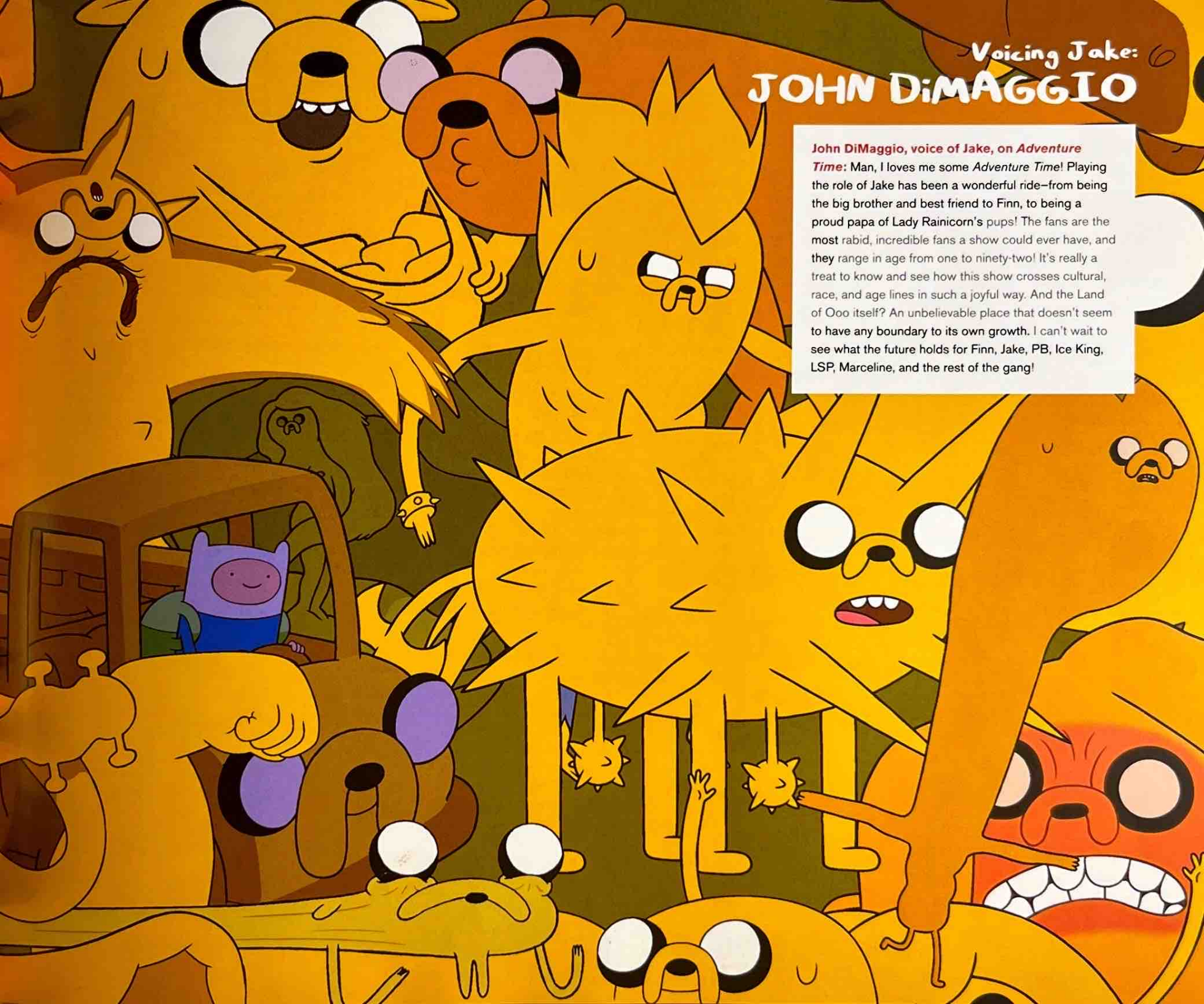




JAKE THE DOG

Jake the Dog is Finn's best friend, roommate, and brother who has the ability to shape-shift and stretch his body into most any form that he can imagine. Jake is older than Finn and helps to guide Finn through difficult situations.

This spread: Jake's stretchy powers necessitate many special-pose models to be created for the animation production studio's reference. Here is a collage of a fraction of them.



Voicing Jake:
JOHN DiMAGGIO

John DiMaggio, voice of Jake, on *Adventure Time*: Man, I loves me some *Adventure Time*! Playing the role of Jake has been a wonderful ride–from being the big brother and best friend to Finn, to being a proud papa of Lady Rainicorn's pups! The fans are the most rabid, incredible fans a show could ever have, and they range in age from one to ninety-two! It's really a treat to know and see how this show crosses cultural, race, and age lines in such a joyful way. And the Land of Ooo itself? An unbelievable place that doesn't seem to have any boundary to its own growth. I can't wait to see what the future holds for Finn, Jake, PB, Ice King, LSP, Marceline, and the rest of the gang!

FOR REVISIONISTS

good jakes.

JAKE CHANGES SHAPE A LOT SO HE ALWAYS LOOKS DIFFERENT... BUT THESE RULES HELP HIM STAY IDENTIFIABLE

NORMALLY JAKE IS LIKE A CUTE DUMPLING

IN FRONT OR 3/4 KEEP HIS EYES ALWAYS ROUND!

Ok... Better!

TRY TO AVOID EYE TANGENTS!!!

HE CAN CHANGE SHAPE, BUT... WHEN HE'S CHILLIN KEEP HIM LIKE A LOAF.

so cute!

JAKE'S EYES ARE DIRECTIONAL.

EYES BEHIND MUZZLE.

SCARY! FUNNY!

MOUTH BEHIND OR UNDER MUZZLE.

JAKE'S REAR 3/4 IS HARD TO DRAW. DON'T BE SCARED. IT'S NOT SO BAD.

SAME GOES FOR HIS PROFILE.

NO FLOATING EYEBROWS.

No! YA!

ADVENTURE TIME IS NOT FLAT!

DRAW WITH VOLUME.

A FEW GOOD JAKES FOR REFERENCE:

WHEN IN DOUBT, PLEASE JUST COPY WHAT'S ALREADY ON THE BOARD

Left: "Good" Jakes, for revisionists. A collection of tips on how to draw Jake by storyboard revisionist and supervisor Ian Jones-Quartey.

Below: Fashion ideas for Joshua, drawn on a Post-it note by Cole Sanchez.

Opposite: "Funny" Jakes by Jesse Moynihan from the first episode he worked on as a storyboard artist, "Crystals Have Power." The episode was co-boarded by Cole Sanchez.







(Continued from page 84)

Jake, like Finn, has a simple but unique design. Constructed like a dough ball, flour sack, or slightly deflated balloon, with the magical ability to shape-shift into almost any form, Jake's body is generally handled without issue by the crew. Jake's snout and eyes, however, have sometimes been the source of consternation.

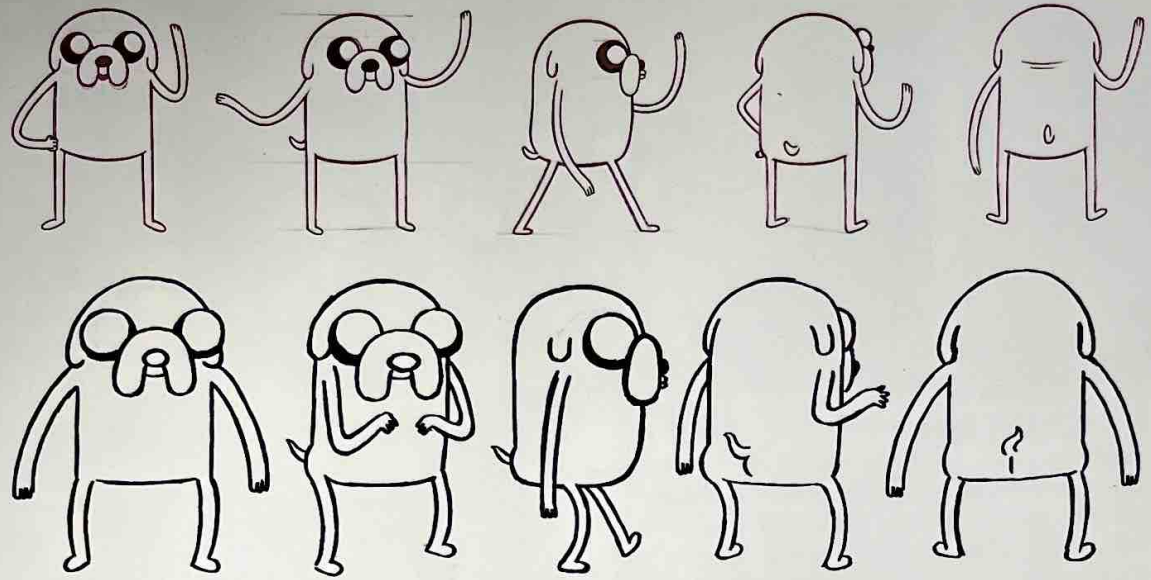
Jesse Moynihan: I find that drawing Jake's snout smaller and smaller makes him look more appealing. I also like to give him a butt these days. After five seasons of working on this show, his eye placement still poses a challenge for me. It's nearly impossible to make the three-quarter view from behind look natural and nonfreakish. I just accept that if there's an over-the-shoulder shot of Jake, it's going to look weird.

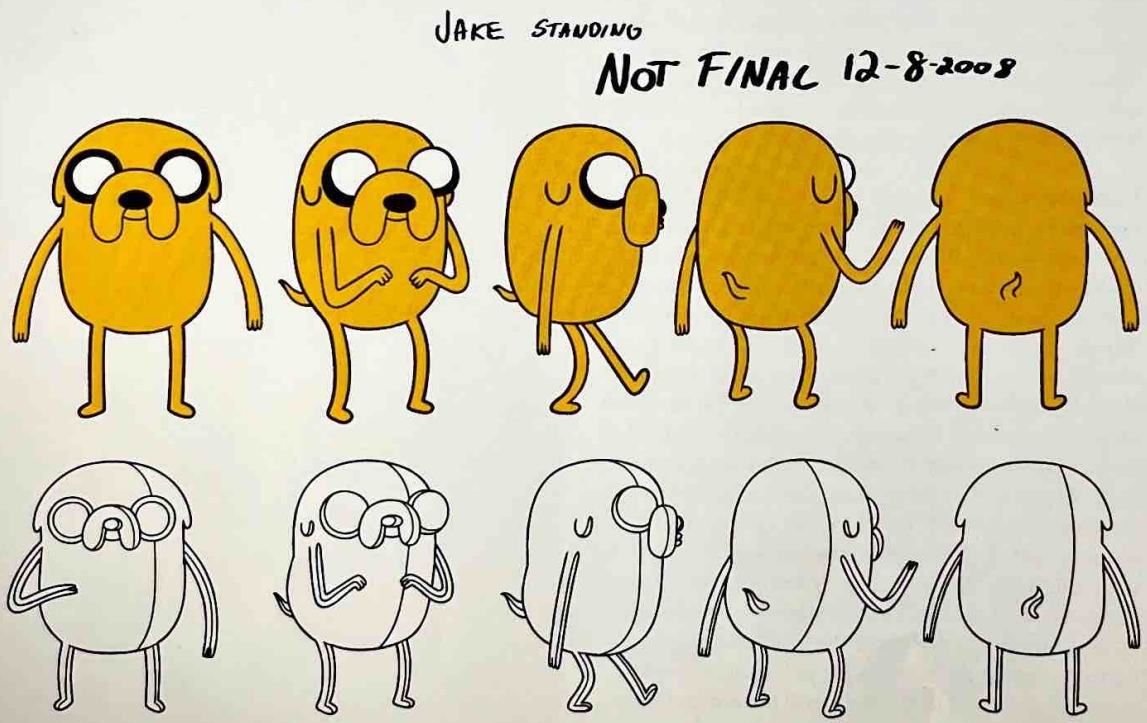
Thomas Herpich: I had a hard time with that same thing for a while—the three-quarters view of Jake from behind. I would try to have his eyes wrap around his head somewhat, and it always looked off—but I felt like Pen unintentionally solved it for me at some point with a board panel where Jake's eyes were just half-circles protruding from his face. It was a little more abstract, but looked right to me. I think that's part of Pen's prerogative, but also something that he really excels at: breaking the rules in an intuitive way that feels really right—righter than "correct."

Pen Ward: Man, I drew Jake in that three-quarters view, and the way his eyes and jowls didn't work cracked me up. . . . I remember thinking about that when I was designing the pilot—that he'd always make me laugh from that angle, because it'd always look awkward—and that was a good thing . . . to me. But I remember feeling bad when the storyboard artists were figuring him out for the first time on the show and they were dealing with how awkward Jake was to draw. But everyone changed him; the show evolved as everyone figured out nicer ways to handle Jake's design. As my drawing ability has developed over the last seven years, my Jakes have become looser and looser. Now I just draw Jake like a beanbag chair.



Jesse Moynihan: "Crystals Have Power" was the first episode I worked on as a boarder. I hadn't figured out how to draw any of this stuff, and Jake was especially challenging. I was totally winging it. I didn't know what worked or what didn't, so I just tried my best. The drawings came out totally bonkers. I hadn't ever thought about drawing "volume," and had barely ever thought about depicting "space." It was a big shock to see those drawings animated. I was pretty horrified. Some of it was pretty funny, but the fan reaction was really negative. The Internet was basically like "What the heck is this crap?" By that time, I had already drawn a season of episodes. I had no idea it was going to animate like that. I was slowly learning on my own, but seeing that feedback really made me realize what I was doing would draw too much attention to itself. I don't want the audience to get pulled out. I want them be immersed in the story and the environments.





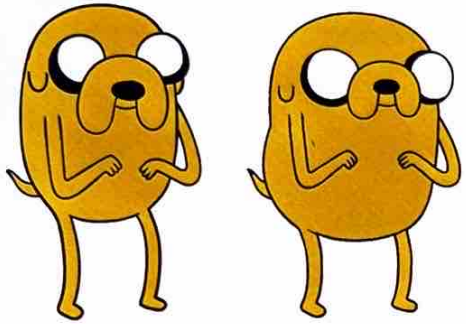
This page: Jake designs from rejected (top row), not final (second row, by Phil Rynda), production model (third row), to revised model with rim lighting indicated with line art (fourth row, by Matt Forsythe).

So I tried my best to make my drawings less freakish. I looked at Tom [Herpich]'s and Rebecca [Sugar]'s drawings to see what made Jake more appealing looking. Basically just chilling out with Jake's snout. Keeping those lines parallel. Thinking about volume. Obviously my drawings still look like "Jesse drawings," but those are the things I think about. I think I draw Jake's eyeballs differently from everyone else. I like to make the blacks of his eyes prominent.

[Storyboard artist] Ako Castuera: One day—sometime on season four or five—Tom pointed out to me that I was the only one drawing Jake with toes. That was surprising to me. Drawing Jake feels very natural to me, maybe because I was the revisionist on season one when Pen was doing a lot of boarding. I got to work directly with his drawings more than most of the subsequent boarders, and I didn't have a strongly formed preconception of what Jake was "supposed" to be. But there are lots of things that have changed and influence the way I draw Jake; they mostly came about very organically. Jake's ability to shape-shift has driven a lot of my boarding.

[Lead designer] Matt Forsythe: Looking at season one Jake has the same vibe as looking at old Garfield. He's charming and inventive, but he's grown a lot since then. When I came on in season five, Adam asked me to update the model a little to reflect where the boarders had taken him.

Jake's shape-shifting ability and its limitations are another aspect of the show that are not governed by explicit rules and are still up for debate among the crew.



Left: A clear comparison of season one and season five Jake design models arranged by Matt Forsythe.

Right: A personal Jake drawing by designer Robertryan Cory.



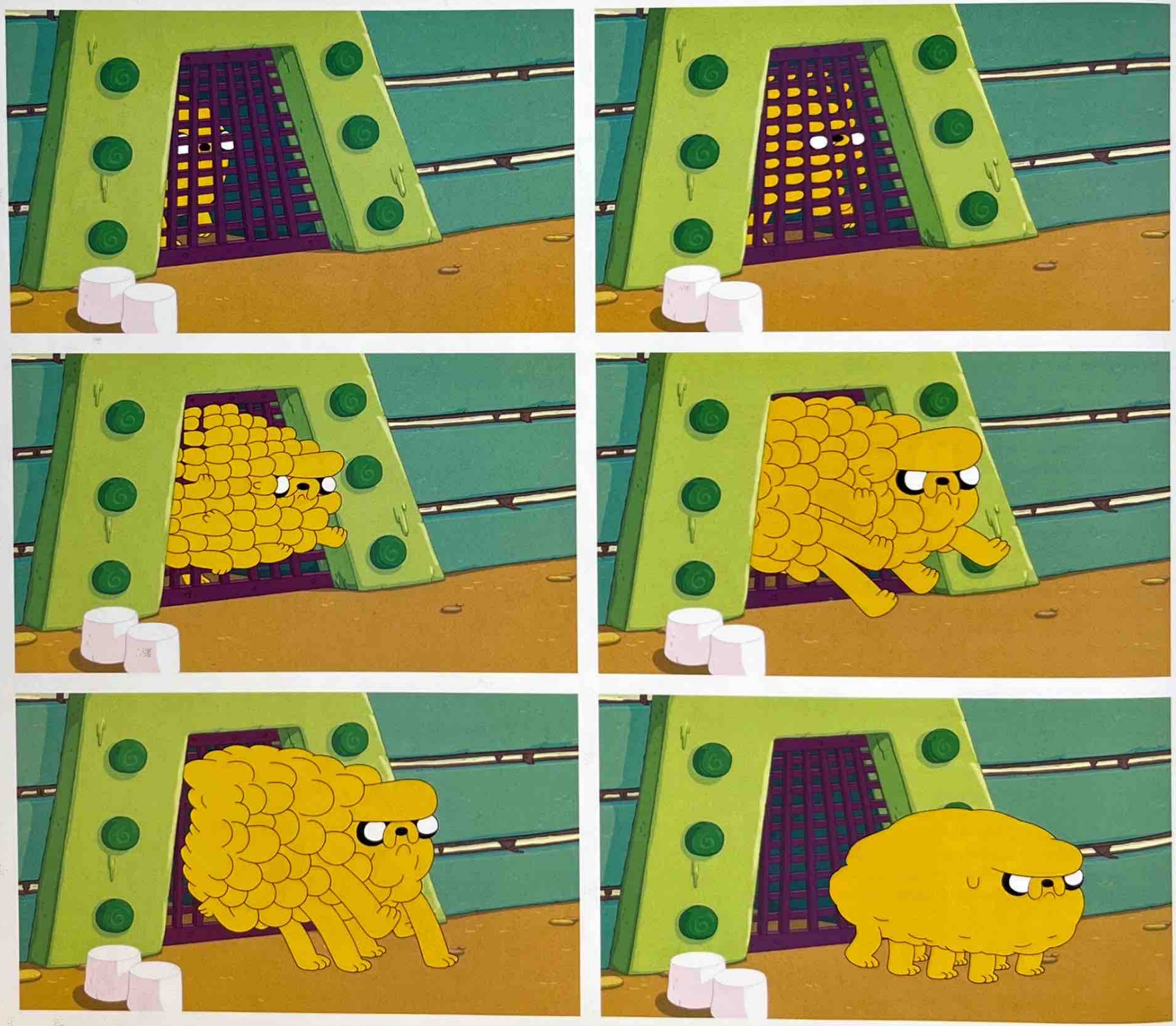
Jesse Moynihan: In "One Last Job," Ako boarded a sequence where Jake oozes through a gate grid, which implies that he can separate into segments and reform like the T-1000 [the shape-shifting robot in *Terminator 2*]. When I saw that I thought, "I'm not sure if Jake can do that," but I didn't say anything because I thought it was cool. The logic of it could squeak by if no one paid too close attention to it.

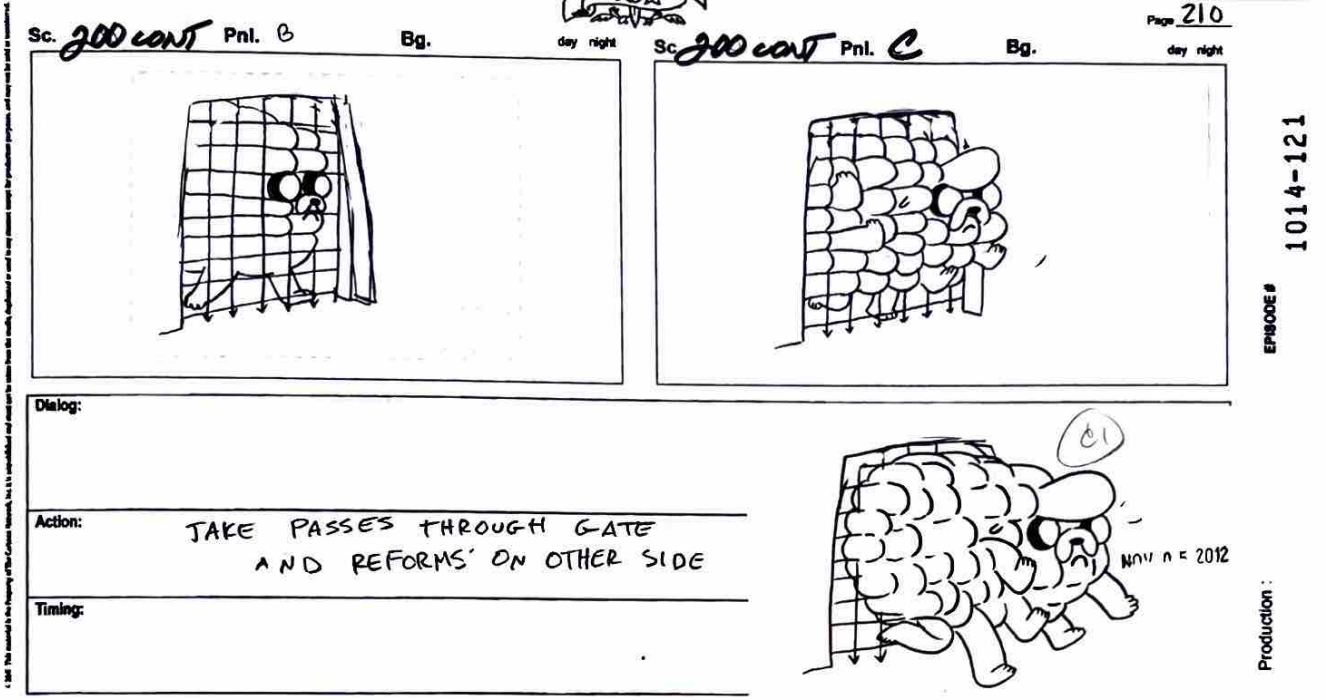
Ako Castuera: In "One Last Job," my logic was that Jake never completely separates into segments; he just pushes through the gate grid like Play-Doh, and before his butt/backside make it through, his front reforms so that he's never truly in pieces. But it's maybe only important for me to know that so I can board it.

Jesse Moynihan: It still doesn't make sense, because when he comes out the other side of the gate, his flesh would essentially have to open up, exposing its guts to regraft with his own flesh. I'm just saying.

Adam Muto: I think Jake still would have been able to squish all of his organs through one hole in the grate. He channeled them all into one place in "Evicted!"

Thomas Herpich: I had Jake transform into a car a couple seasons back, and I do remember thinking, "Is this breaking the rules? Is this physically possible?"—the wheels turning, I mean—but it seemed funny





Opposite: Images from "One Last Job."

Left: Storyboard panels from "One Last Job" by Ako Castuera (panel B) and storyboard revisionist Aleth Romanillos (C and C1) depicting a controversial Jake body transformation. The episode was co-storyboarded by Jesse Moynihan.

Below: Jake's memory and artistic ability limit the accuracy of his hand-formed photo of his girlfriend, Lady Rainicorn, as he tries to gain comfort from her image while stuck in Kee Oth's pit, from the episode "The Pit."

enough to justify itself. I didn't think about it very hard. The main rule of thumb is that he's always sorta squishy; he couldn't turn into a sword that would actually cut anything, just a squishy sword. If someone broke that rule I think it would feel more "off" than these mechanically impossible things.

Ako Castuera: I've been thinking about Jake's artistic abilities lately, about how he's really doing sculptural impersonations with his magic body. Does he have to know or remember what the car, handcuffs, fake lawyer, etc., look like or feel like to take on their shapes? I imagine it's like drawing someone from memory, and I like the idea that it's something Jake could be bad or good at. I had a scene where Jake misses [his girlfriend] Lady Rainicorn, so he makes a Polaroid of her out of his hand, but he can't quite get it right. I wanted a weird, off-model drawing of Lady for that, so I asked my husband to do a quick drawing of her from his memory. It made me laugh so I used it in the thumbnails.



Two primary players in the series are Princess Bubblegum, ruler of the Candy Kingdom, and Marceline the Vampire Queen, daughter of Hunson Abadeer, evil, soul-sucking lord of the Nightosphere. Both women are years older than they look, Bubblegum having personally overseen the construction of her kingdom long enough ago that it occurred during one of Finn's past lives (roughly somewhere between 15 and 990 years ago), and Marceline having been a small girl at the time of the Great Mushroom War (almost 1,000 years ago). In a case of somewhat arrested development, Marceline emotionally acts closer to a teenager or early twentysomething at best. Bubblegum, too, appears to be a young woman. Both have been the subject of young Finn's crushes. And both have had testy relationships with each other, and with Finn, but have evolved through the series and formed a friendship together.

(Continued on page 100)




This spread:
Jake's stretchy powers are endlessly useful for solving problems and getting laughs.



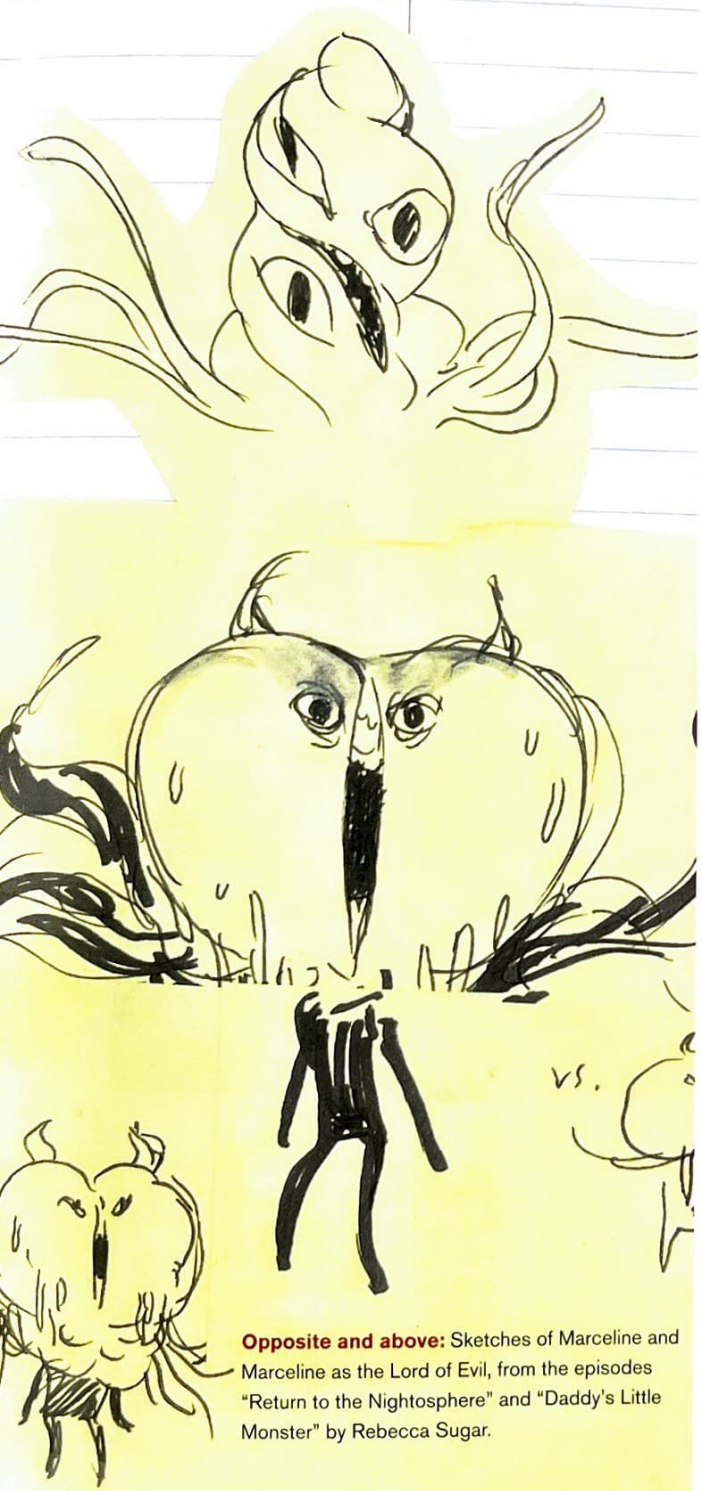
MARCELINE

Marceline the Vampire Queen has a rough relationship with her father, Hunson Abadeer, who abandoned her in Ooo for the better part of a millennium while he was occupied with some evil business in the Nightosphere.



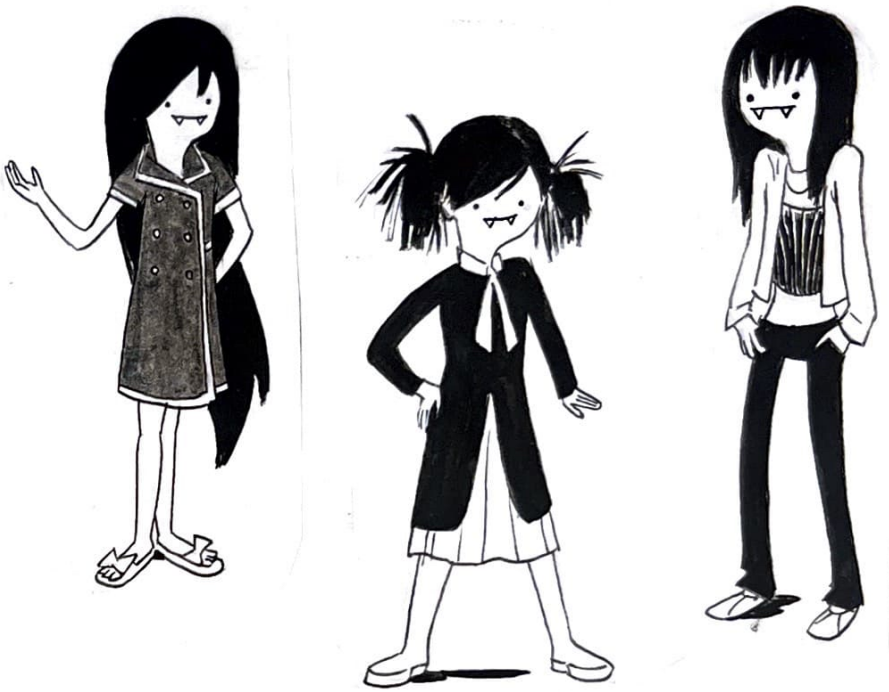






Opposite and above: Sketches of Marceline and Marceline as the Lord of Evil, from the episodes "Return to the Nightosphere" and "Daddy's Little Monster" by Rebecca Sugar.

STORY NOTES ~ MARCELINE / EARLY CONCEPTS

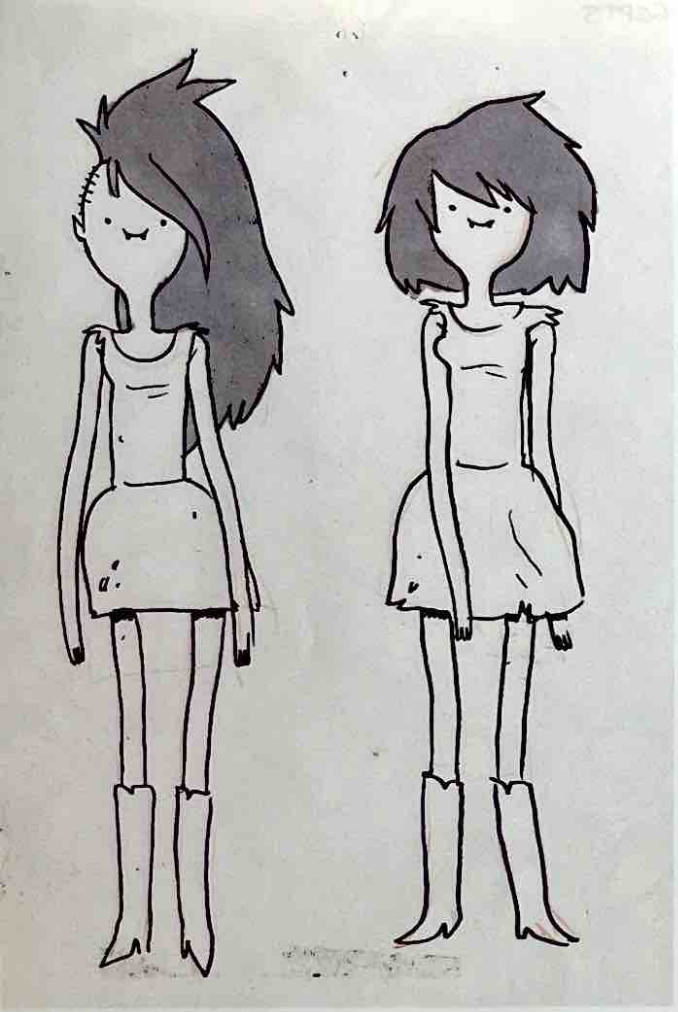


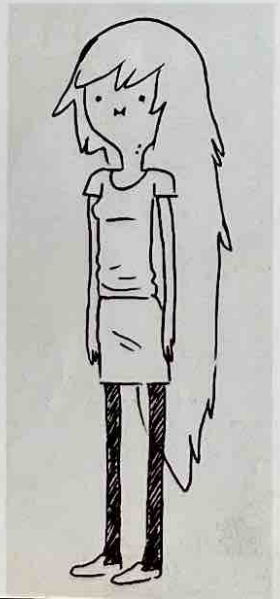
· PROBABLY NOT...





Above: Early Marceline concept drawings from series-development story meetings by Adam Muto.





Above and right: Marceline style concepts by Thomas Herpich.

Above right: Marceline by Rebecca Sugar.



(Continued from page 95)

Rebecca Sugar: Marceline and Bubblegum were both interesting to me. Marceline actively tries to push people away. She seems bad, but she's anxious and doesn't have a high opinion of herself. She throws her weight around and tries to hurt people on purpose because that's less painful than hurting people by accident. Bubblegum is the opposite: She appears good, but she's a sociopath. She thinks very highly of herself, but she's not selfish. . . . She's a cold, calculating tyrant, but she needs to be and knows she does what she does for all the right reasons. They're both scary, they're both control freaks. A monster and a mad scientist . . . secretly selfishly good, and secretly selflessly evil. They're so fun. And I love Finn because he's young and innocent and excitable, and insecure because he's growing up and realizing he's this small part of this big world and bigger history . . . which I related to a lot at the time, what with this being my first job.

(Continued on page 114)









Above: Post-it-note sketch of Marceline fashions by Jesse Moynihan for the episode "Sky Witch."

Above right: Drawing of Marceline in Bat Monster form battling the Crabbit by Ako Castuera.

Right and far right: Special-pose models of Marceline in Bat Monster form.

Voicing Marceline: OLIVIA OLSON



Olivia Olson, voice of Marceline, on the development of Marceline's character:
Marceline's completely relatable to so many strong women I've come across. There's always more than meets the eye. The world sees confidence, maybe even a hint of intimidation or haughtiness. Yet, deep down, there's always a reason she got that way. I'm still learning her backstory as well, and she has lots of layers. Everyone has a front.

On unexpectedly poignant moments in episodes such as "I Remember You":
One crazy episode. I'm a total fan when it comes to this stuff. When I got the script I was thrilled by how complex it was. I had no idea this show would go there. Before I actually got to see the show air I had no idea what it would potentially be. Episodes will make you die laughing because they are so random, think really deeply, make you cry, or make you gasp. But that's why we love it.



On her favorite Marceline transformation form:
Feral-mode Marceline—she looks so messed when she's hungry.

On what she sees for the future of *Adventure Time*:
The way I measure it is each summer at San Diego Comic-Con. The first year I went I saw maybe one person out of 100,000 with a Finn hat on. I thought it was so sick! I actually tracked him down to snap a picture with me. Each year it has multiplied and exploded. Nowadays I see full-on *Adventure Time* mobs. Groups of friends who seriously have the whole crew. It amazes me how lucky I am that I get to be a part of something so huge. I was saying to my man, "It's crazy how almost every day of my life, no matter where I go, I see a doll, someone mentions, has a shirt, or quotes the show." *I get to be a part of that!* There really is something for everyone on *Adventure Time*. I don't see our cult movement going anywhere for a long, long time.



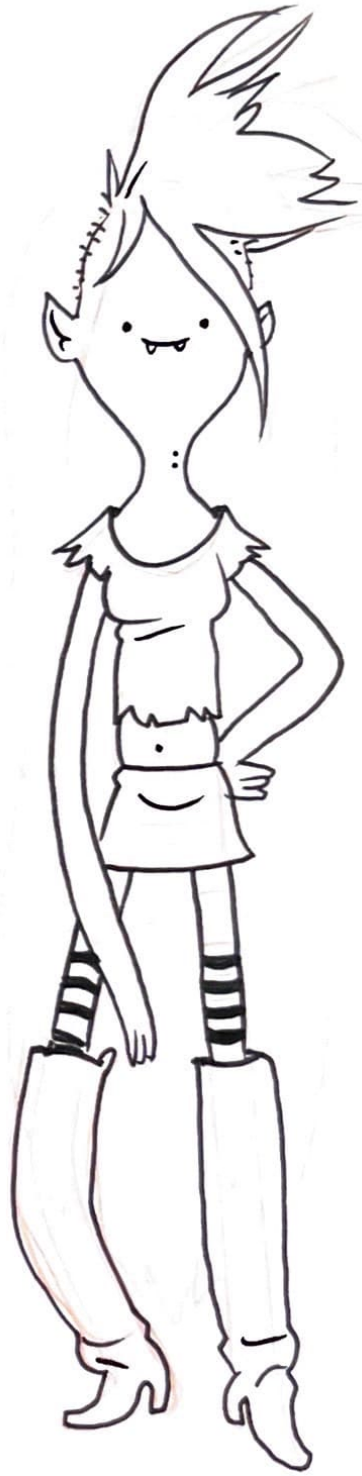
This page: Marceline drawings by Seo Kim.

Inset left: Feral-mode Marceline from "Red Starved."

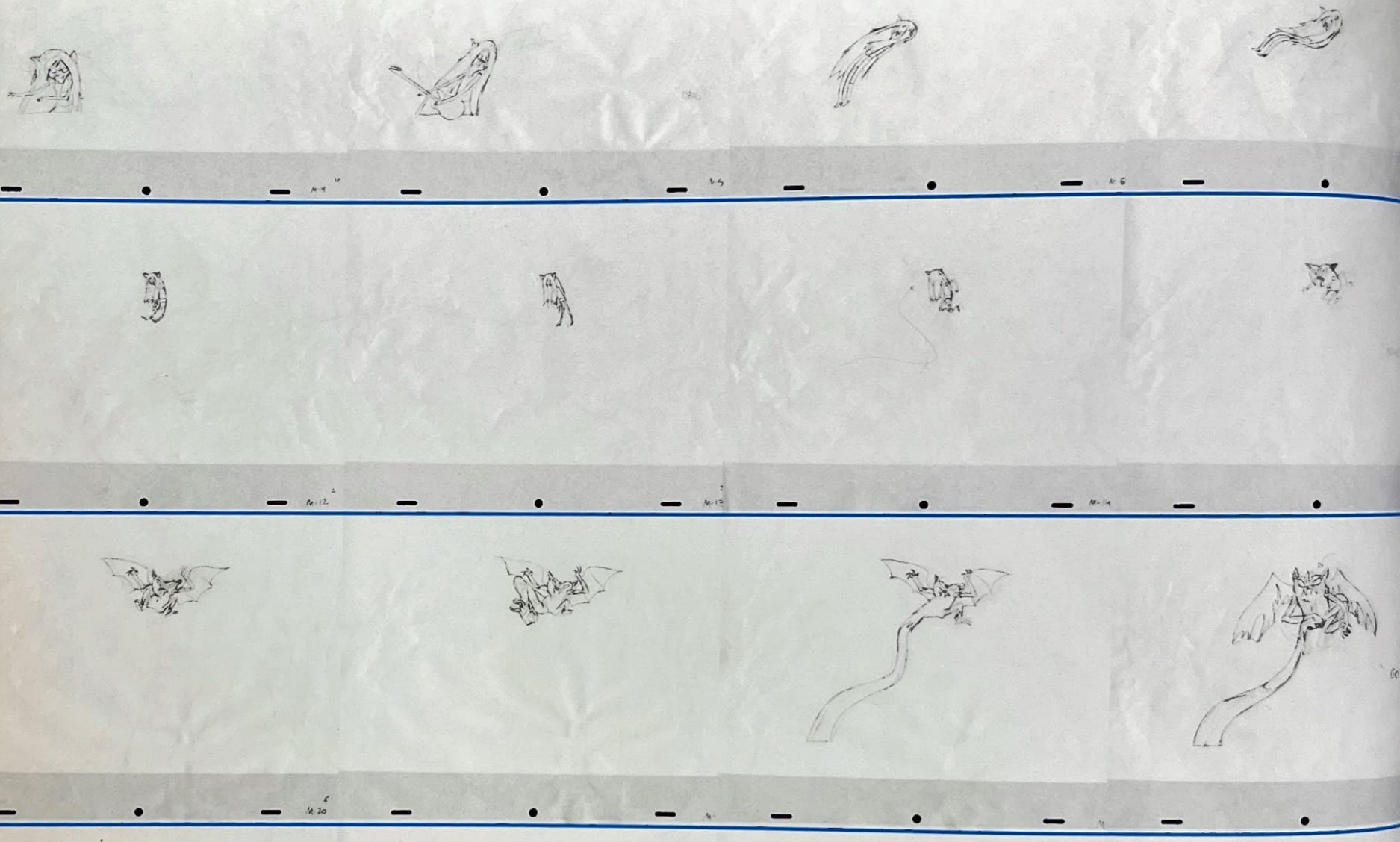
Opposite: Marceline drawings by Thomas Herpich.

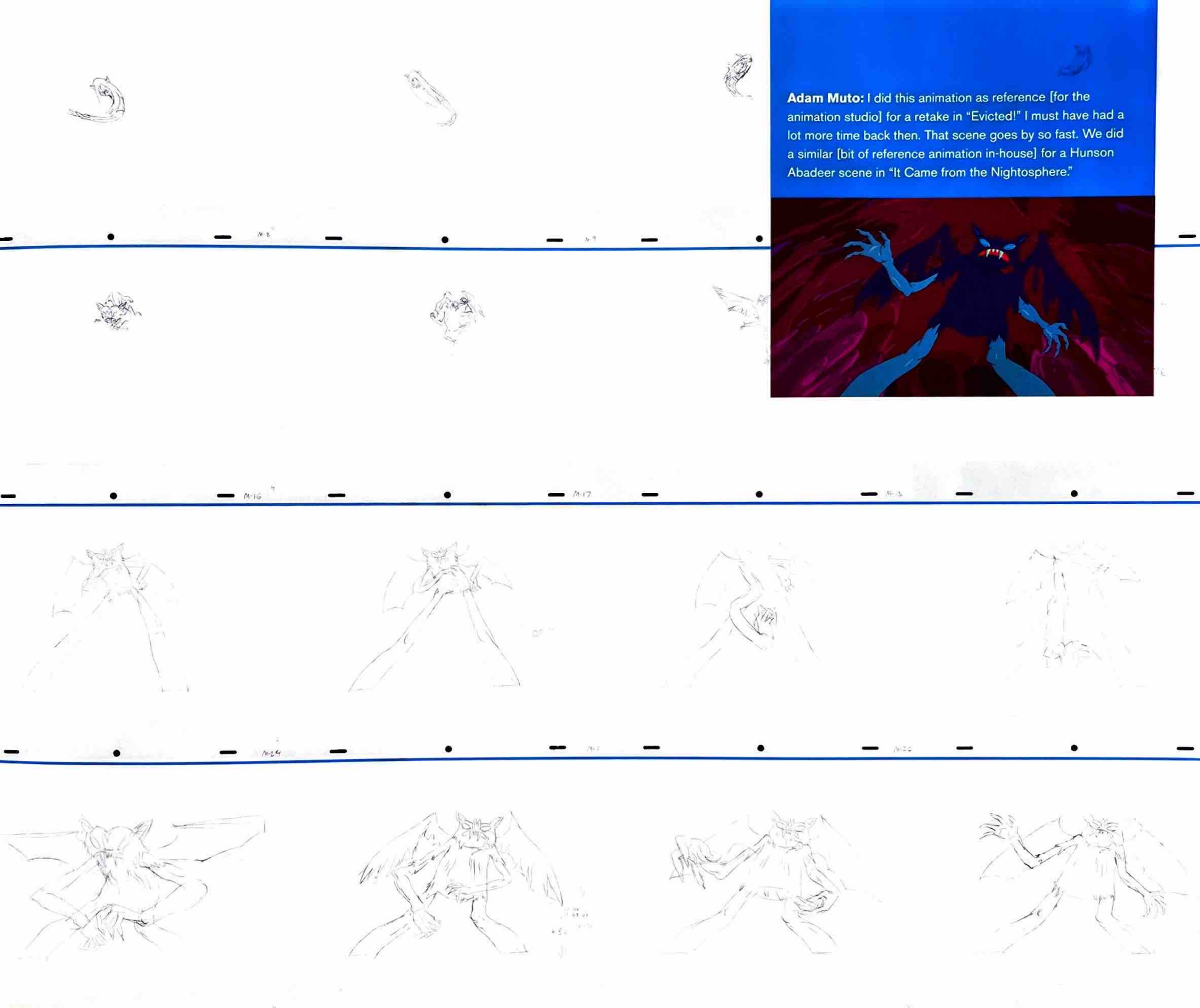






MARCELINE TRANSFORMATION

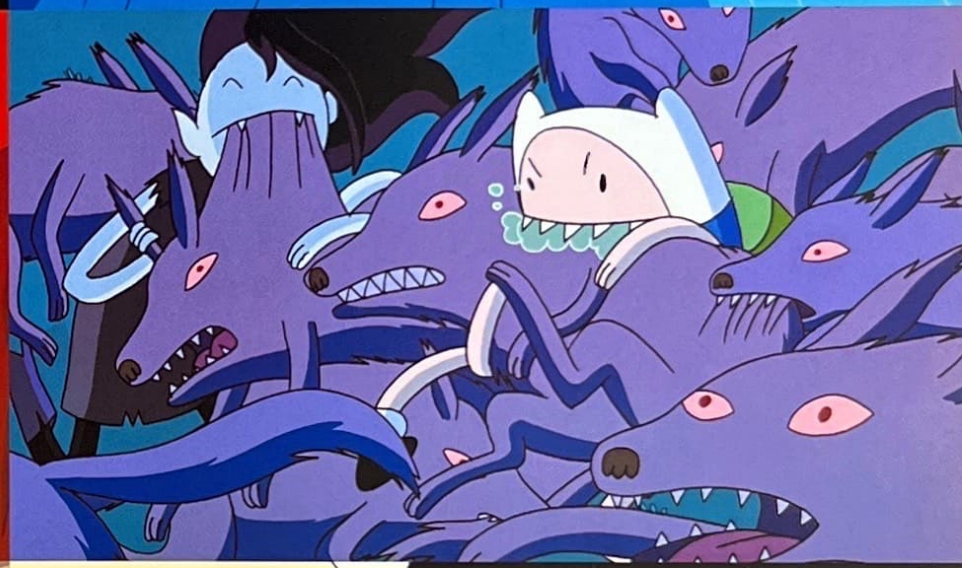




Adam Muto: I did this animation as reference [for the animation studio] for a retake in "Evicted!" I must have had a lot more time back then. That scene goes by so fast. We did a similar [bit of reference animation in-house] for a Hunson Abadeer scene in "It Came from the Nightosphere."


This spread:
Marceline the bass-playing vampire sustains herself on the color red–not blood (fortunately for the new friends in her life, Finn and Jake).



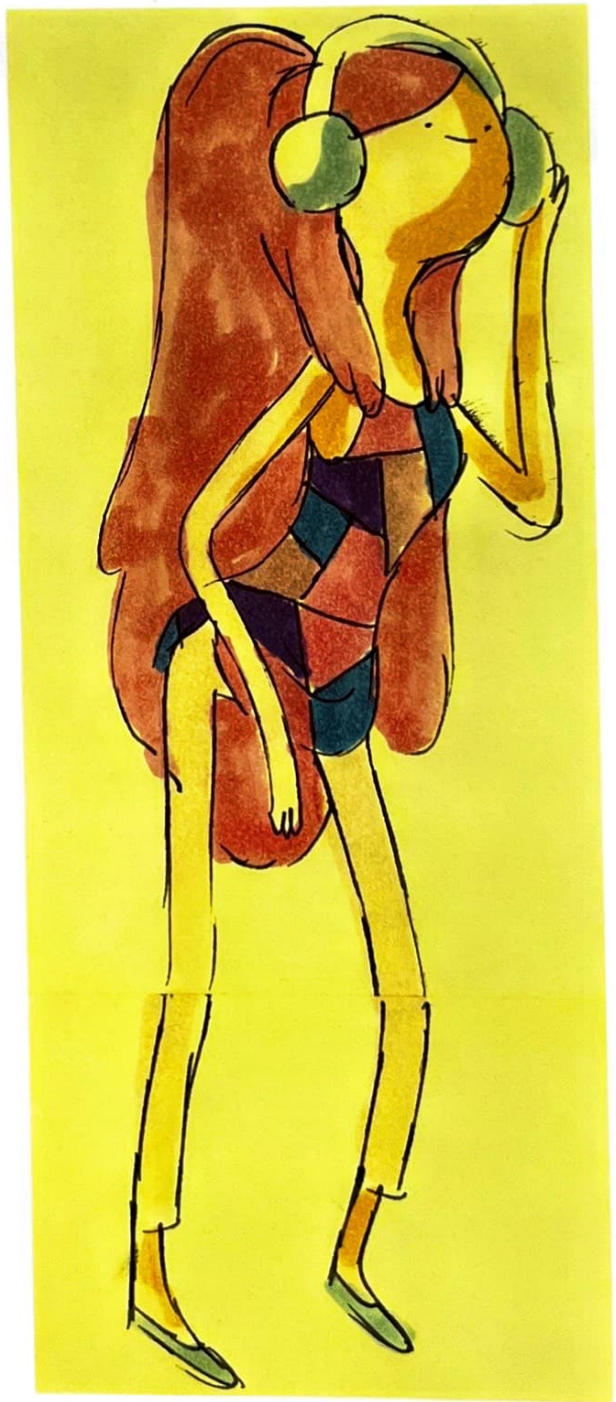



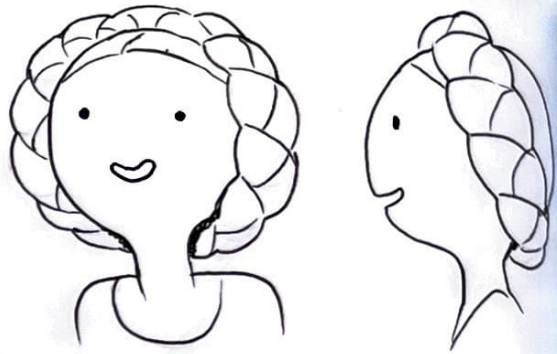


PRINCESS BUBBLEGUM

Princess Bubblegum rules the Candy Kingdom with a pink bubblegum fist. Her pastimes include conducting scientific experiments, performing electronic music, and autocracy.







PRINCESS
BUBBLEGUM

Left: Concept drawings of Princess Bubblegum as a DJ by designer Erica Jones for the season six episode "Breezy."

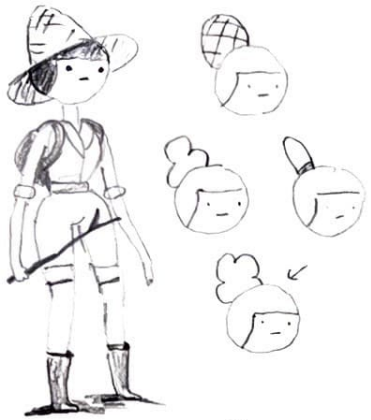
Above: Princess Bubblegum hairstyle drawings by Thomas Herpich.







PB Study



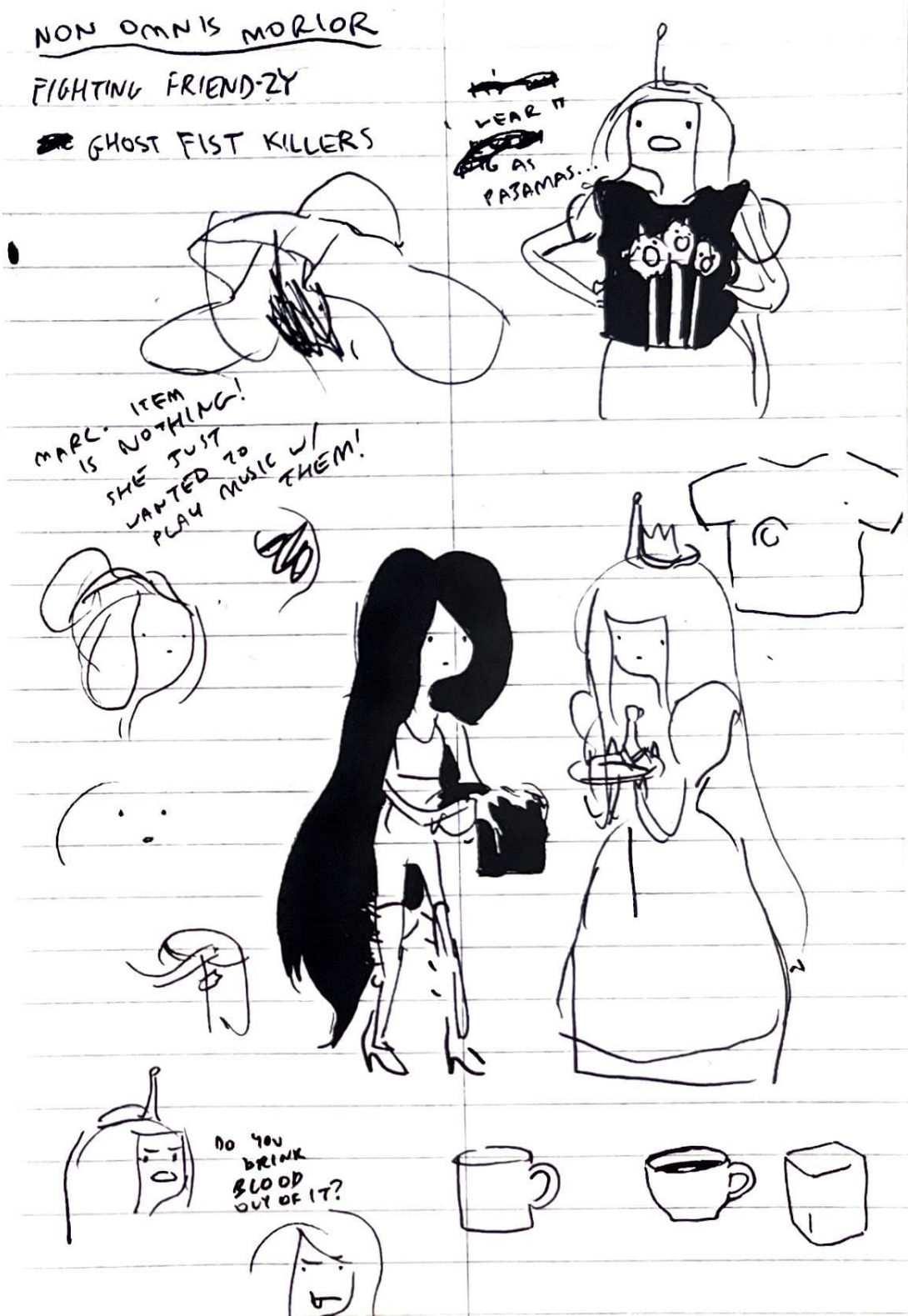
PB in Expedition Gear

Above, below: Princess Bubblegum style studies, including expedition gear and a pose with Marceline, by Seo Kim.

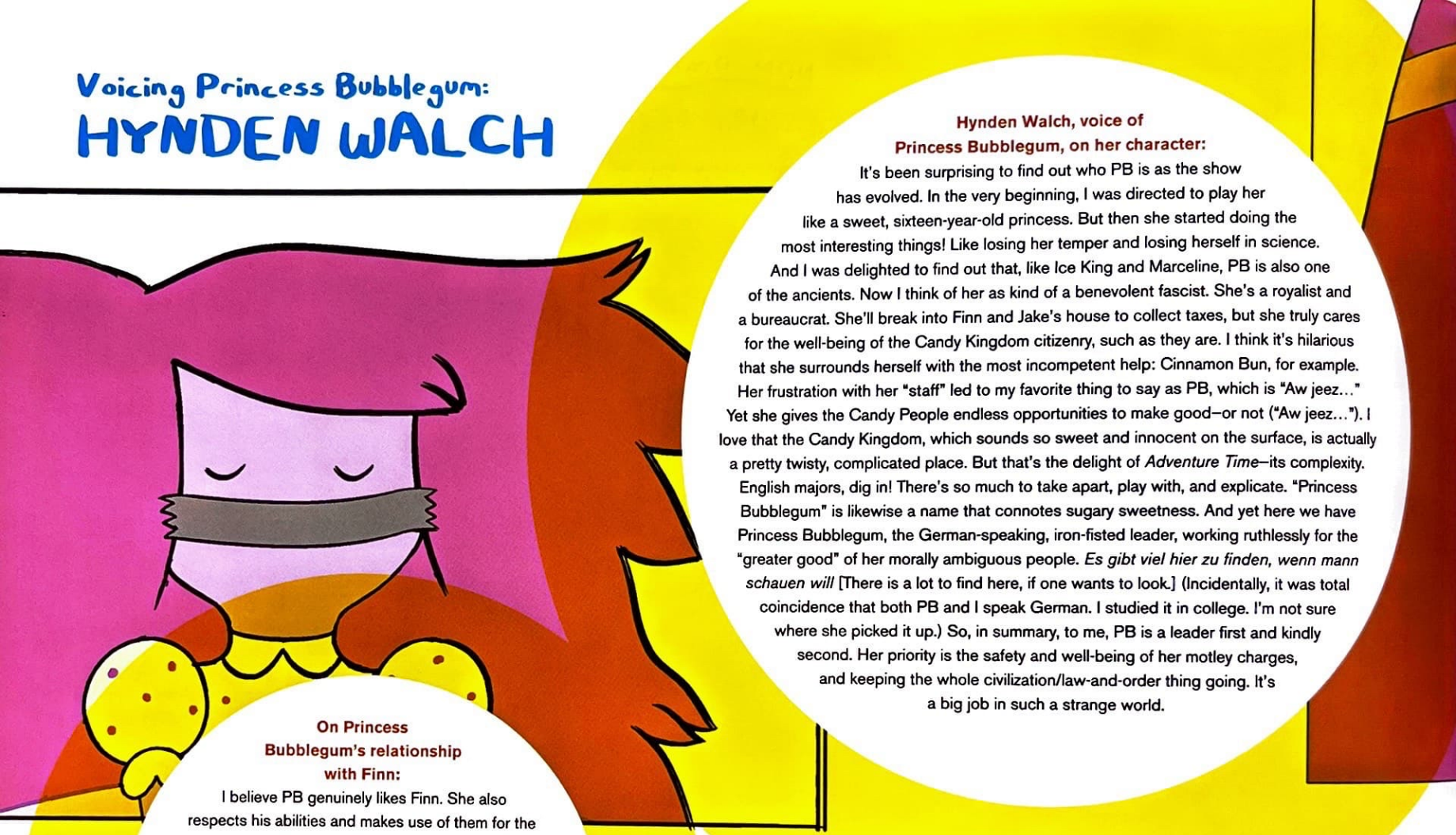
Right: Princess Bubblegum and Marceline drawings by Rebecca Sugar for the episode "What Was Missing."







Voicing Princess Bubblegum: HYNDEN WALCH



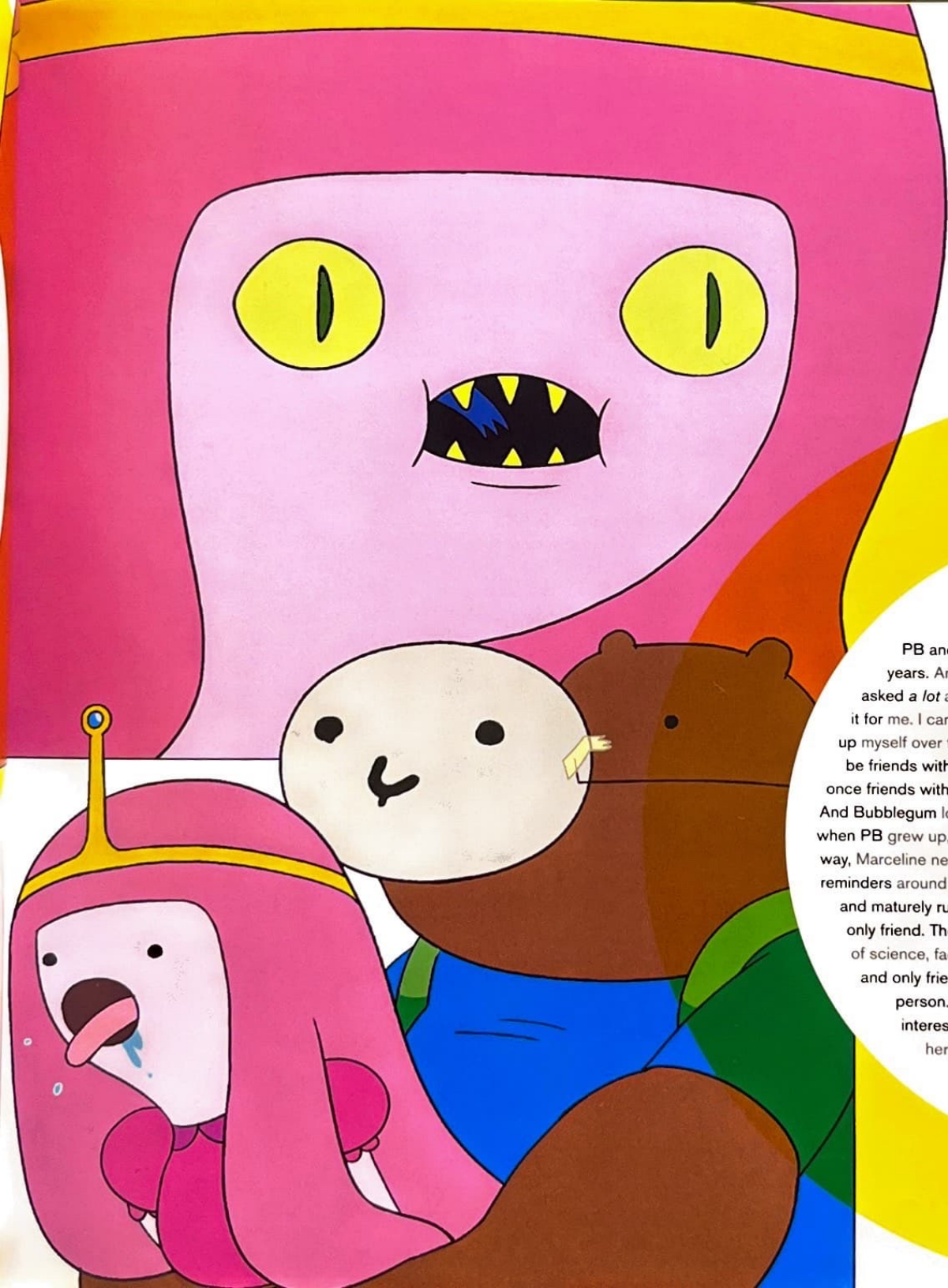
Hynden Walch, voice of Princess Bubblegum, on her character:

It's been surprising to find out who PB is as the show has evolved. In the very beginning, I was directed to play her like a sweet, sixteen-year-old princess. But then she started doing the most interesting things! Like losing her temper and losing herself in science. And I was delighted to find out that, like Ice King and Marceline, PB is also one of the ancients. Now I think of her as kind of a benevolent fascist. She's a royalist and a bureaucrat. She'll break into Finn and Jake's house to collect taxes, but she truly cares for the well-being of the Candy Kingdom citizenry, such as they are. I think it's hilarious that she surrounds herself with the most incompetent help: Cinnamon Bun, for example. Her frustration with her "staff" led to my favorite thing to say as PB, which is "Aw jeez..." Yet she gives the Candy People endless opportunities to make good—or not ("Aw jeez..."). I love that the Candy Kingdom, which sounds so sweet and innocent on the surface, is actually a pretty twisty, complicated place. But that's the delight of *Adventure Time*—its complexity. English majors, dig in! There's so much to take apart, play with, and explicate. "Princess Bubblegum" is likewise a name that connotes sugary sweetness. And yet here we have Princess Bubblegum, the German-speaking, iron-fisted leader, working ruthlessly for the "greater good" of her morally ambiguous people. *Es gibt viel hier zu finden, wenn mann schauen will* [There is a lot to find here, if one wants to look.] (Incidentally, it was total coincidence that both PB and I speak German. I studied it in college. I'm not sure where she picked it up.) So, in summary, to me, PB is a leader first and kindly second. Her priority is the safety and well-being of her motley charges, and keeping the whole civilization/law-and-order thing going. It's a big job in such a strange world.

On Princess Bubblegum's relationship with Finn:

I believe PB genuinely likes Finn. She also respects his abilities and makes use of them for the betterment of the Candy Kingdom, which is the highest compliment she could give him. PB has always known their age difference and possibly species difference (human vs. gum?) would never allow for any kind of romantic entanglement. I think PB is just waiting for Finn to grow up and see the logic in this as well. But she's glad that, if he must pine for someone, he pines for her. In her mind, she believes that she's best able to protect Finn while he's still young and vulnerable. Of course she makes plenty of mistakes with his poor little heart, especially when she's distracted by a science experiment or a threat to the Candy Kingdom.

This spread: Various special models of Princess Bubblegum that were sent to the animation production studio for reference.





On Princess Bubblegum and Marceline's friendship:

PB and Marceline have known each other for hundreds of years. And Marceline is actually the older of the two. I've been asked *a lot* about their relationship, so I asked Kent and Pen to clarify it for me. I can't remember who said what or how much of this I've made up myself over time, but here's what I choose to believe: Marceline can only be friends with kids. That's why she likes Finn—he's young. Marceline was once friends with Bubblegum when she was a kid (i.e., hundreds of years ago). And Bubblegum loved her back—as an older sister, friend, fun babysitter, etc. But when PB grew up, Marceline didn't want anything to do with her. In her Peter Pan way, Marceline never wanted to grow up herself. She certainly couldn't keep any reminders around of time's passage, like an adult Princess Bubblegum smoothly and maturely running an entire kingdom by herself. But Marceline was PB's only friend. The fact that Marceline abandoned her drove PB toward a life of science, facts, and bureaucracy. Because she was so hurt by her first and only friend, PB chose a life of isolation over intimacy with another person. Thus, she's kind of a squirrelly loner; thus, she's not interested in suitors; thus, she substitutes the adoration of her governed masses for love. But I'm really hoping someone comes along and rocks her world.





This spread:
Princess Bubblegum is a complicated figure, often shaping the events in Ooo through her technology and the manipulation of her subjects–Finn included.
















COSMIC OWL

Typically seeing the Cosmic Owl means that you are visiting with Prismo in the Time Room, having a "croak dream" vision of your impending death, or using the urinal in the second floor men's restroom at Cartoon Network Studios in Burbank, California.

(Continued from page 100)

The other residents of Ooo provide a design playground for the artists of *Adventure Time*, where almost any kind of creature can exist. The Cosmic Owl is one of several otherworldly beings in the show's universe. Its design was inspired by a routine trip to the men's room.

Pen Ward: One day I walked into Adam's office and saw some doodles on his desk; one of them was of these two overlapping ovals that he had made into eyes, and the body around it was a screaming fat owl with stars in its wings . . . but the eyes were super familiar to me. I stood there for a moment staring at them, and I think I said, "Those eyes . . .," and Adam had a goofy smile on his face and he said, "You recognize them?" and I was like, "*Yeah!*" 'cause on the second-floor men's bathroom at Cartoon Network, the light hits one of the urinals a certain way that it bounces off and casts this mystical face on the wall in front of you—just starin' at ya. Adam drew it! It was awesome . . . and we plugged him into an episode as the Cosmic Owl.



ART

Character designs range on a spectrum of cute and friendly characters (candy people, cloud people, princesses, and rainicorns) to dark, dangerous, grotesque characters (Death, Ricardio, and the Lich). The middle of the spectrum is where the curious and especially imaginative designs live. These are the more nuanced characters in the sense that they don't immediately identify as cute/good or grotesque/evil. These are simply the strange characters that live in Ooo, not unlike the alien-looking critters that exist in the deep-sea trenches of Earth, just living their everyday deep-sea lives. When organizing a variety of Pen's drawings into folders for reference for the crew, Phil Rynda placed them into Cute, Gross, and Inventive categories to highlight their differences.









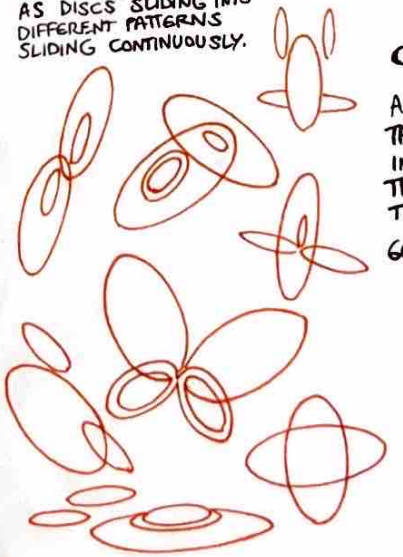


This spread: On a "new story ideas" page of notes from early in season one production (opposite), Adam Muto doodles a "Cos.McOwl." Another page from Adam's notes (below) details possible origins of the Cosmic Owl and style references for the sparkling wing effects (the science-fiction and fantasy illustrator Frank Kelly Freas's specific star-sparkle style is the inspiration here). Top left is a photo of the light reflections above one of the two urinals in the Cartoon Network Studio second-floor men's room. This reflection appears only over one of the urinals and was the inspiration for the Cosmic Owl and its design.









COSMIC OWL~

A PAIR OF FORMER DISK GALAXIES COLLIDING. THE CORES OF THE INDIVIDUAL GALAXIES ARE IMBEDDED IN HOT DUST AND CONTAIN A LARGE NUMBER OF STARS. TWO HUGE WINGS SWEEP OUT FROM THE CENTER. TIDAL TAILS OF STARS AND GAS

600 MILLION LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH...





Above: The giant baby from "The Enchiridion!" has his giant scale reinforced by the relatively tiny ungulates strapped to his limbs as snacks at the ready. These details also suggest some of the giant baby's habits and life outside of his featured scene in *Adventure Time*.

Opposite: A selection of Emmy Award–winning designs from the episode "Puhoy" by designer Andy Ristaino, based on storyboard designs by Thomas Herpich and Steve Wolfhard.

[Lead designer] Matt Forsythe: Everything *exists* in the *Adventure Time* universe. Often people think it's a crazy show with no rules, and that's a mistake. When I bring a design to Adam, I know he is going to ask how the sword is attached to the belt, and I have to know the answer. I think it's part of what grounds the show and makes us want to believe everything else that is happening.

Phil Rynda: We attempted to make every character appear to have lived a life outside of their appearance in the episode. I love giving characters bandages and scars. Pen or Pat had the great idea to strap animals to the body of the giant baby from "The Enchiridion!" It served to help show the scale of the baby, which was the problem I was dealing with, as well as giving the baby "snacks" to have at the ready. I loved that. Pen and Pat constantly were surprising me with how far they could push themselves outside the box.

Thomas Herpich joined the crew early during season one, initially in the design department. His visual style and character design has informed much of the show, and was doing so even before he arrived.

Pat McHale: Phil convinced Tom Herpich to come to L.A. from New York City to work on the show, which was really great because we were already trying to rip off some of his art style anyway—we gave some of his drawings to [art director] Nick Jennings and said, "We want it to look like this." So it was really great when he decided to come out and work on the show.

Thomas Herpich: When I accepted the design gig on *Adventure Time*—I was a designer for the first season, then switched over to boarding for the second season on—I had never worked in the industry and really had no idea what I was signing on for. I kinda thought I did, based on the test they had me take, but nope. The test was something like, "Draw a bunch of neat weird things from your imagination," and I thought, "I can do that," but then I got out here and found that, in reality, it's more like, "Here, someone already drew this, you refine it a bit and then draw it from behind, too, and that's it." At least that's what it felt like at first. The old bait and switch. I grew to appreciate some of the subtleties over time . . . but still it was mostly a lot of refining preexisting board drawings. Also drawing lots of clouds: smoke clouds, dust clouds, steam clouds, etc.—lots of rocks, drips, splashes, etc. As you can maybe tell, I wasn't such an amazing fit for the job. My heart wasn't in it the way Phil [Rynda]'s, Andy [Ristaino]'s, and [designer Robertryan] Cory's were or are. That eventually evolved into me rushing through the actual real part of the job to make time for doing tons of concept drawings [of character design suggestions], which wasn't part of the job description, but which I was way more passionate about, then giving



CHARACTER CONCEPT ART



This spread: Concept artwork by Thomas Herpich from season one, some of which was adapted directly into use in storyboards, and all of which helped to define tone and style for the developing series.

them to the boarders and hoping they'd use them in their boards so I could later get my own designs back to keep working on. Self-interest fueling the greater good, I guess.

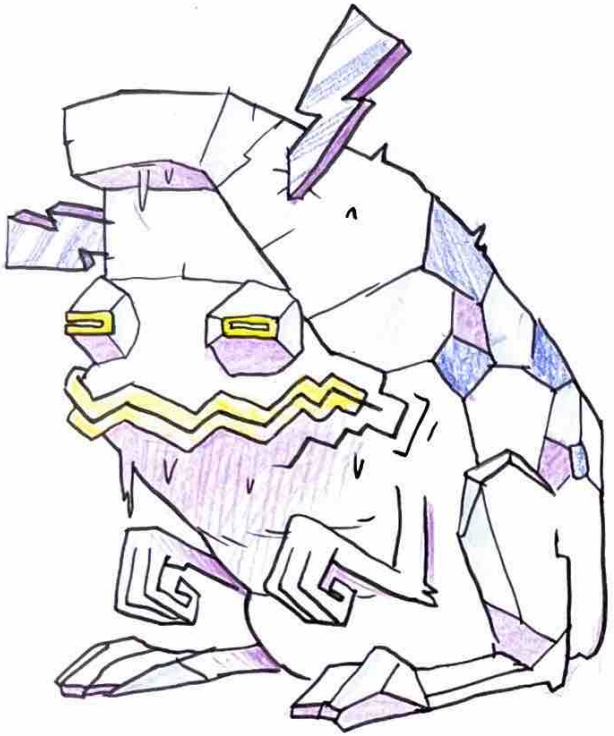
I think I could've still ended up boarding if I hadn't designed first, but it was definitely a big "foot in the door" kind of thing, at the very least. Plus I didn't really have the ambition or imagination to even think of myself as a boarder; it took Pen saying, "Hey, man, you'd be good at this, you should be doing this" to get me moving.

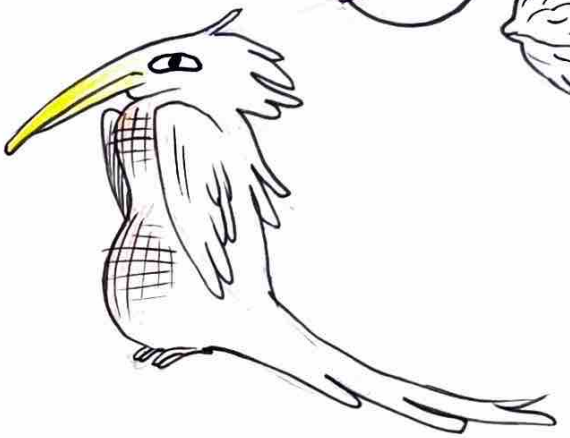
Adam Muto: On the first season, especially, we asked for a lot of concept drawings from the designers whenever they had the chance. Maybe partially because the look of the show was still evolving and we didn't have a firmly established idea of what the characters were "supposed" to look like. Tom was great at generating fleshed-out and inspiring character designs.

There have been a few instances when we've pushed to get early concept designs for new kingdoms or environments. Since we knew we'd probably be going back there, Andy designed a ton of characters for the Fire Kingdom while we were working on the first episode set there.

I wish there was a perpetual pile of concepts to scan through for ideas. That's a luxury there's often no time for, the production schedule being what it is. Periodically, I'll flip through those old concepts looking for stuff that would work with the contemporary episodes. It doesn't usually work out, since often they were designed for a very specific episode or environment.

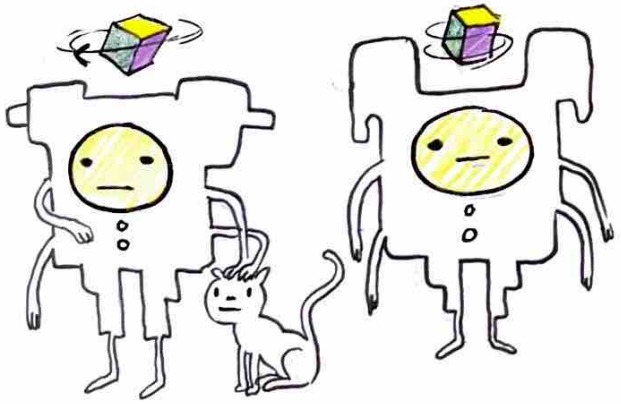
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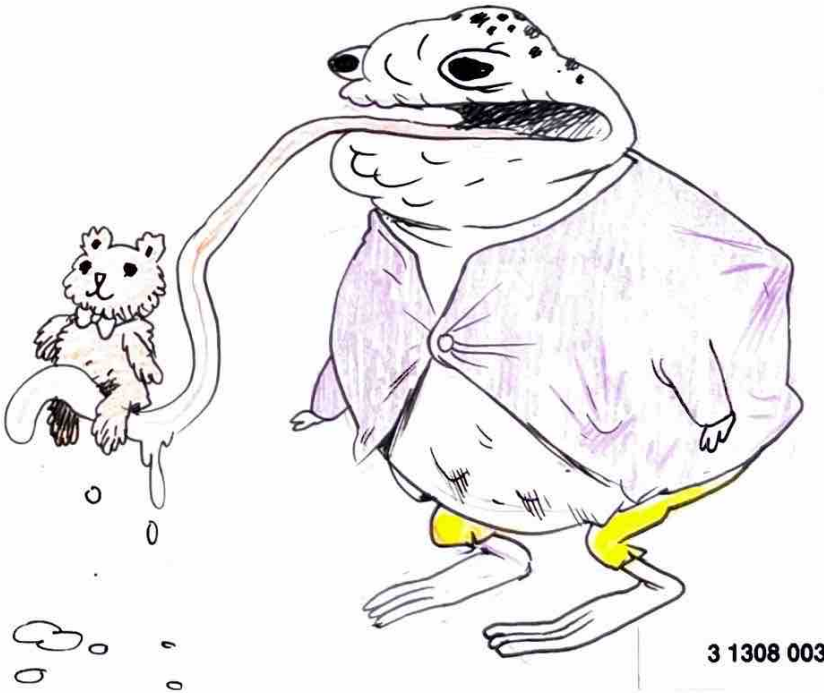






Rotating cube heads





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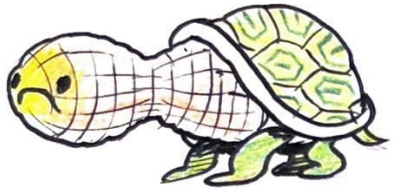
CHARACTER CONCEPT ART



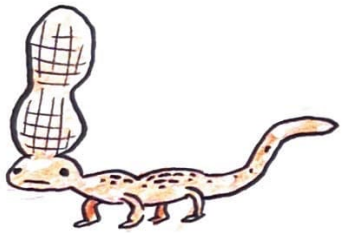












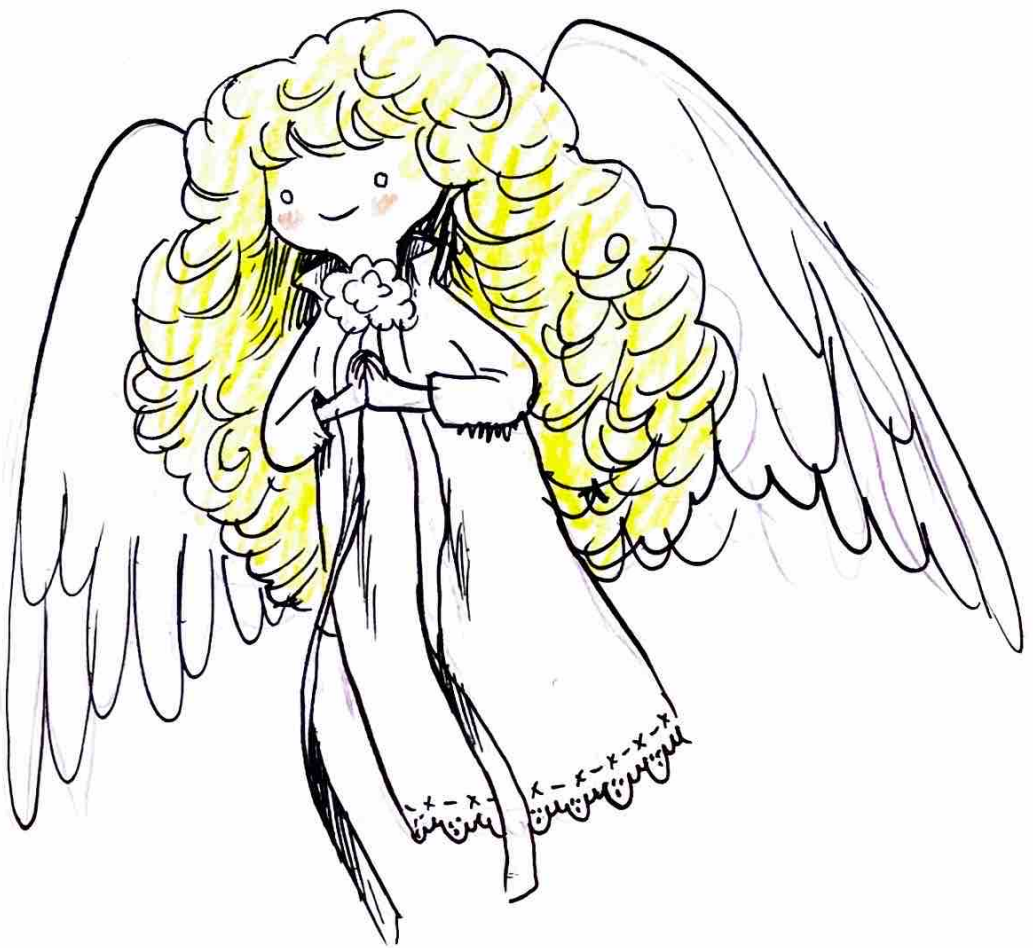
This spread: Concept artwork by Thomas Herpich, including designs for the Duke of Nuts and Princess Bubblegum's chariot from "Duke of Nuts," Spiky People from "Gut Grinder," and the Guardian Angel from "Dungeon."

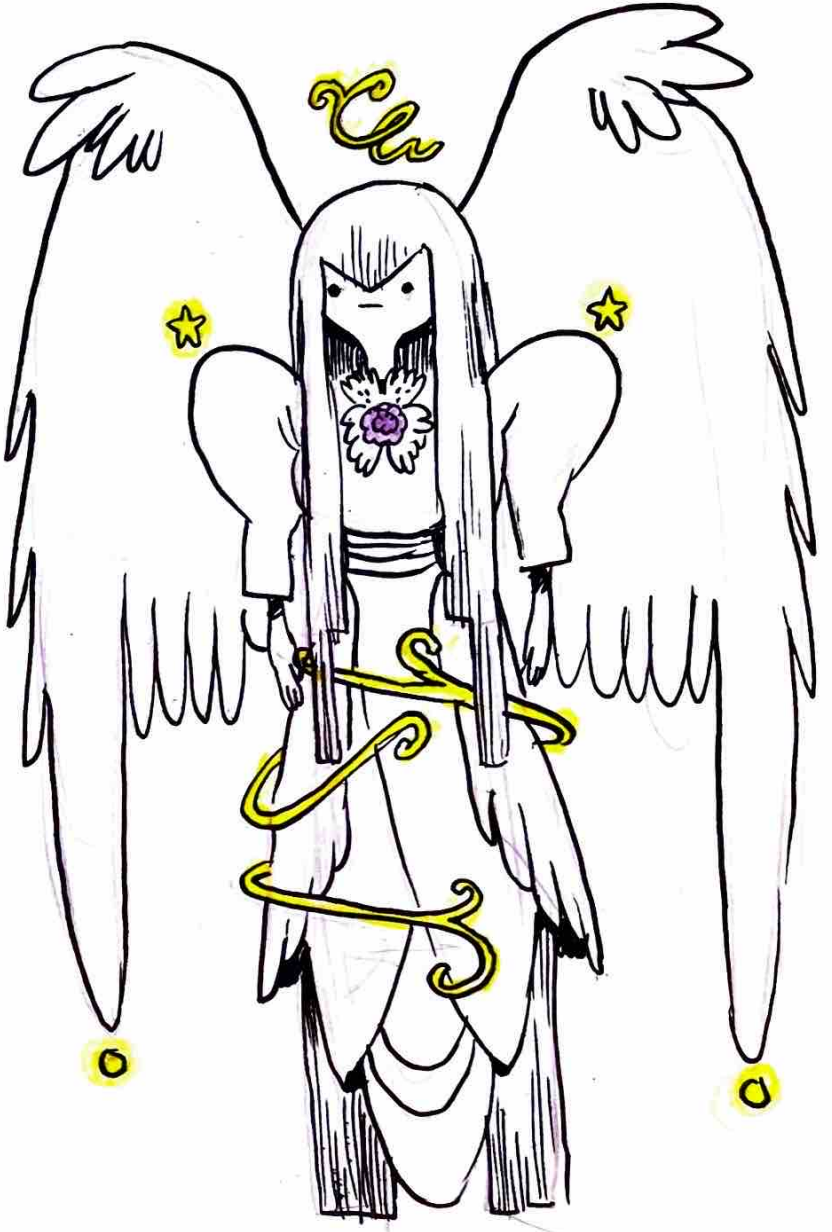




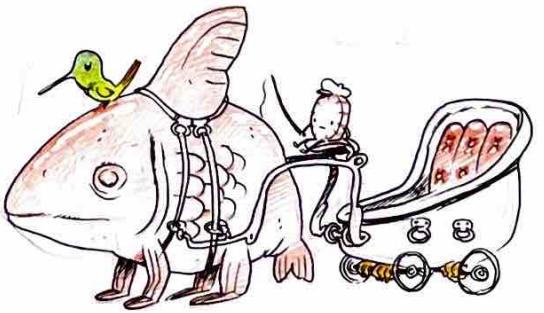


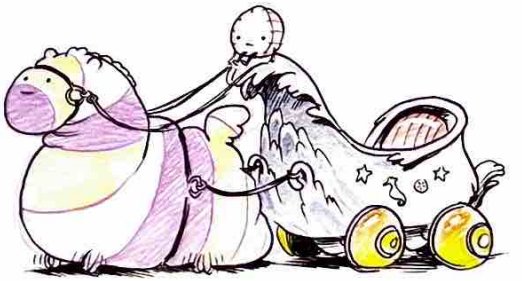












CHARACTER CONCEPT ART

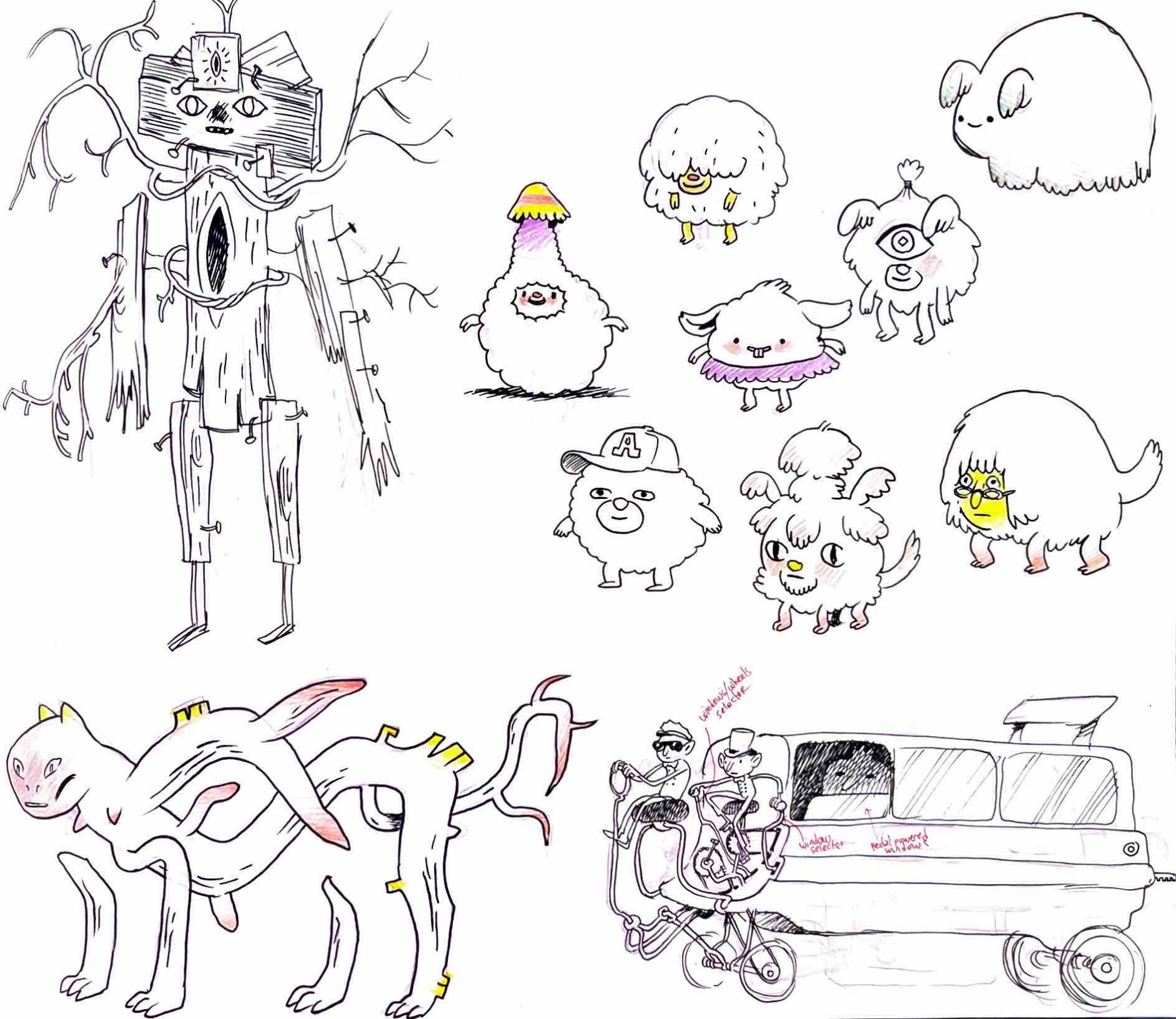
This spread: Concept artwork by Thomas Herpich, including designs for a Sign Zombie from "Tree Trunks," Demon Cat from "Dungeon," and the limo from "Ocean of Fear."



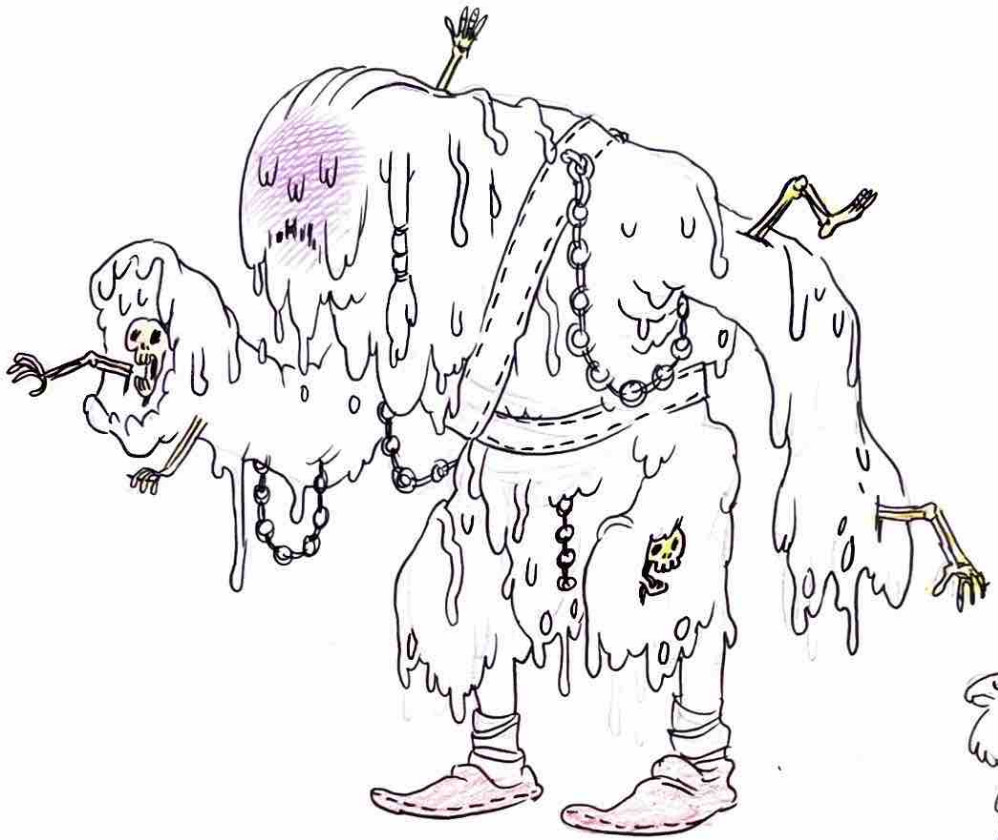


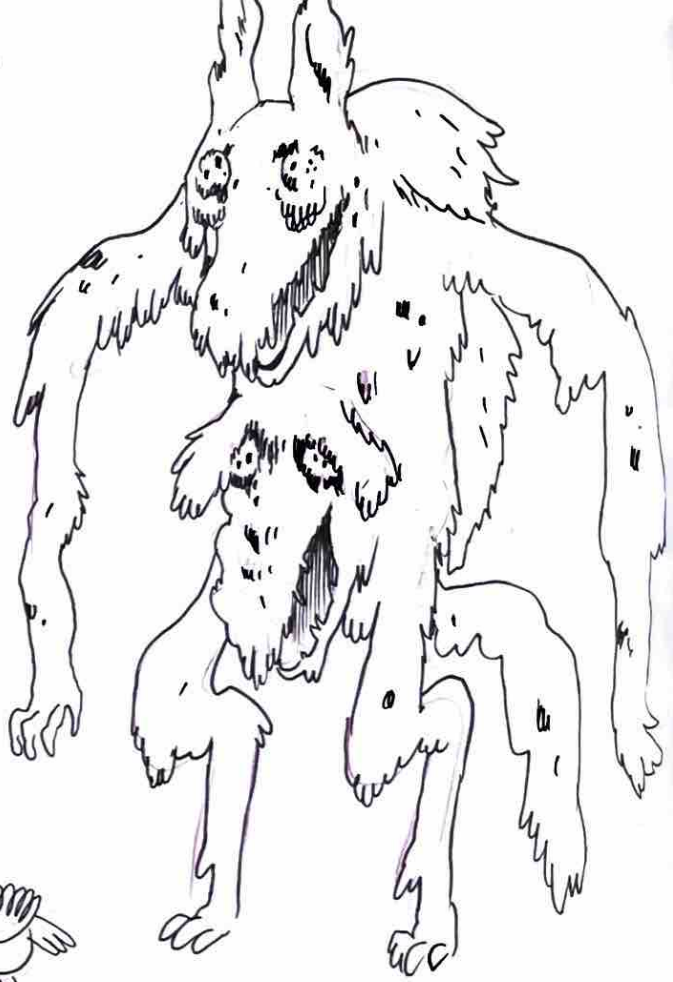




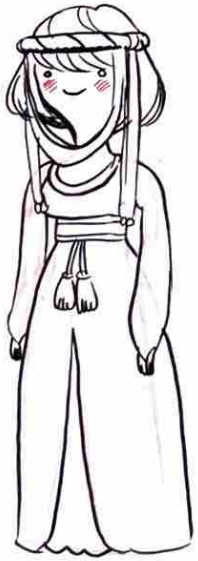

windows/wheels selector
window selector
pedal powered window

CHARACTER CONCEPT ART

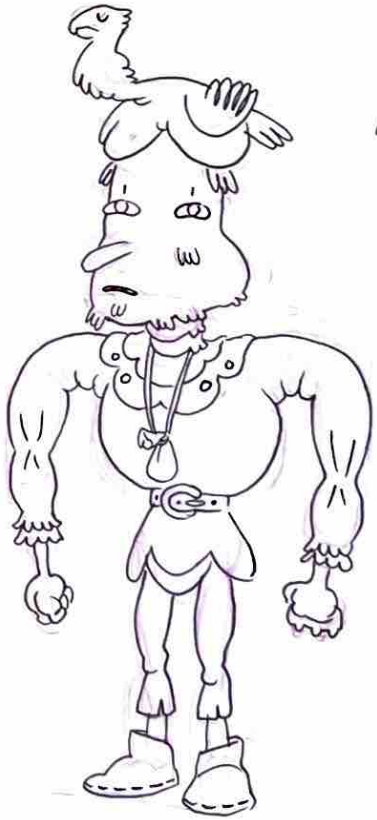


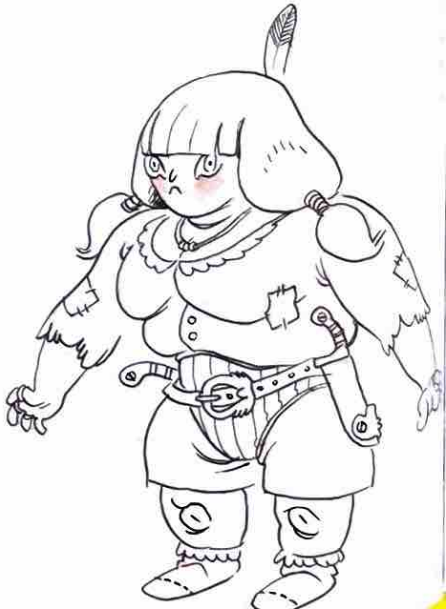


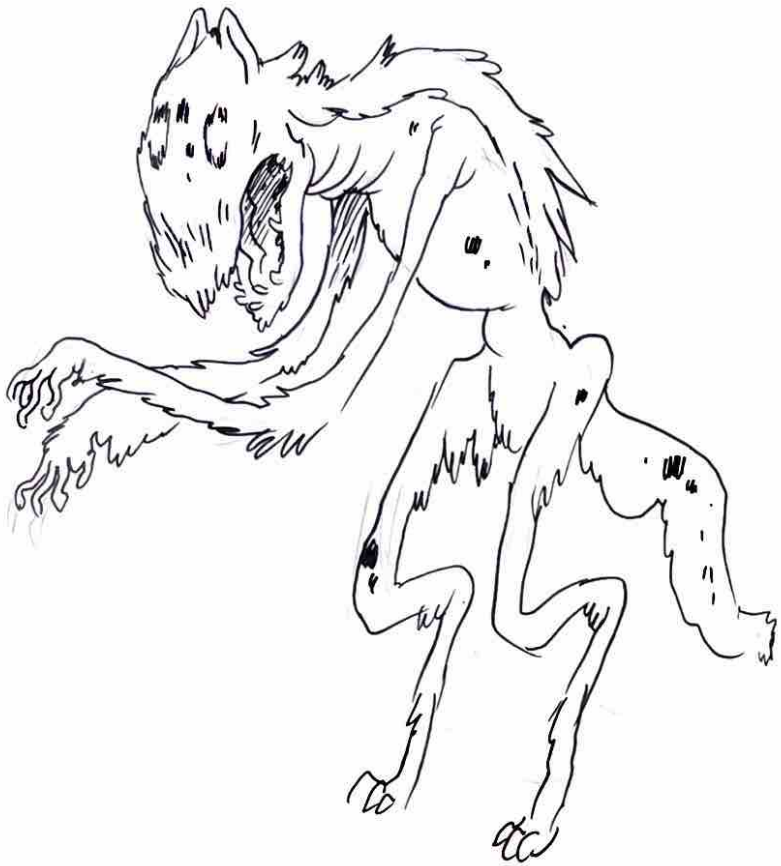


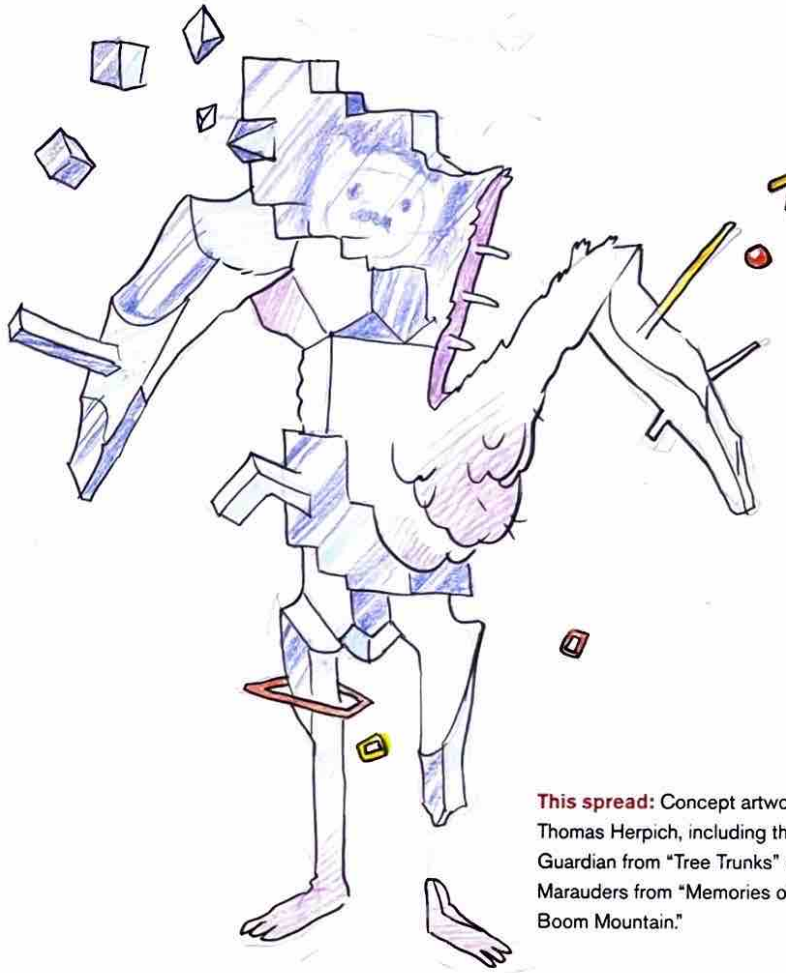




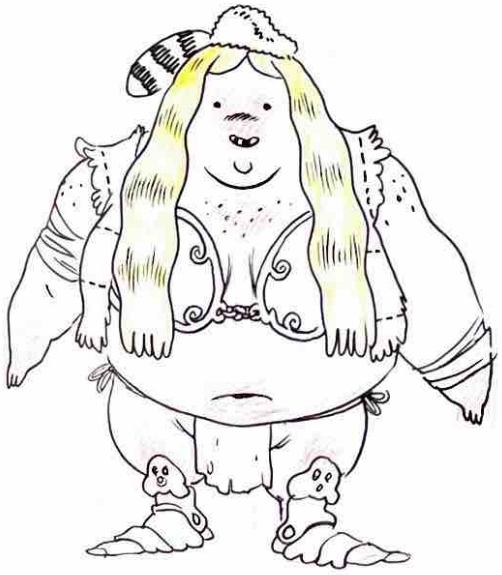




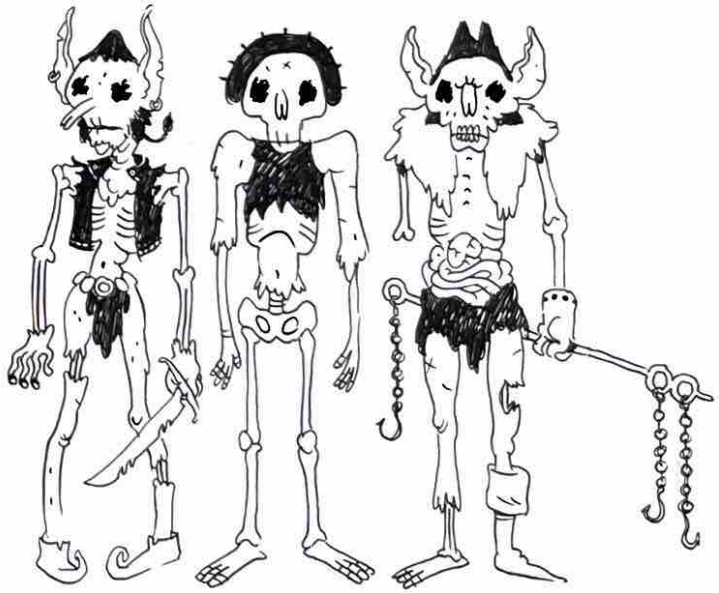




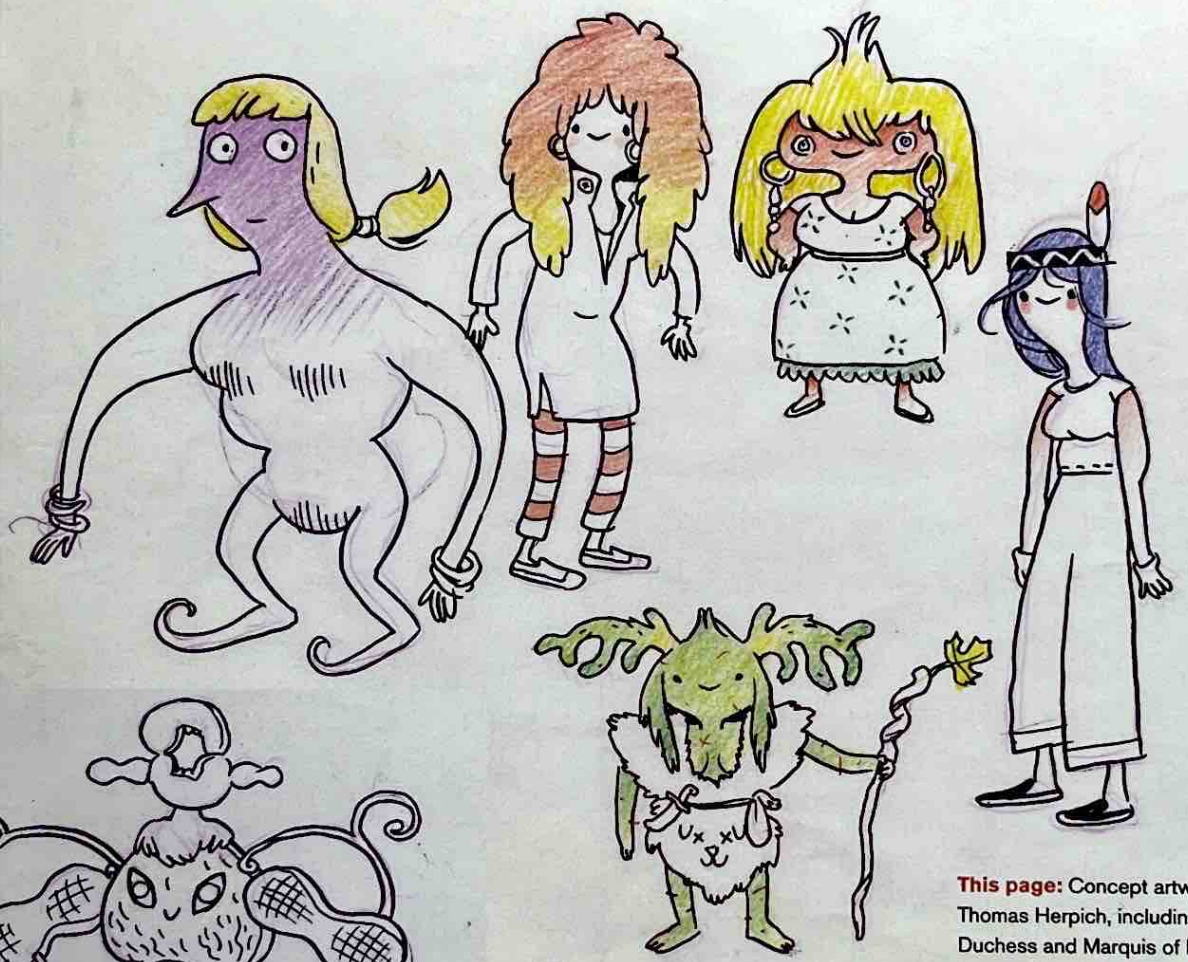
This spread: Concept artwork by Thomas Herpich, including the Crystal Guardian from "Tree Trunks" and Marauders from "Memories of Boom Boom Mountain."







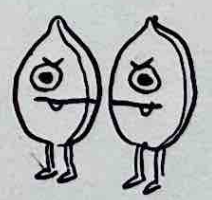
CHARACTER CONCEPT ART



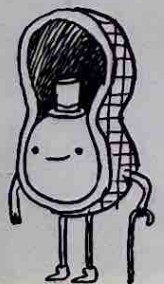


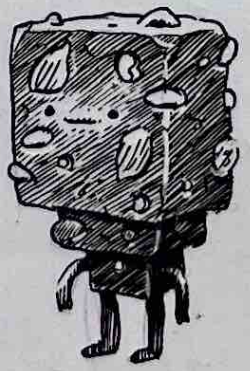


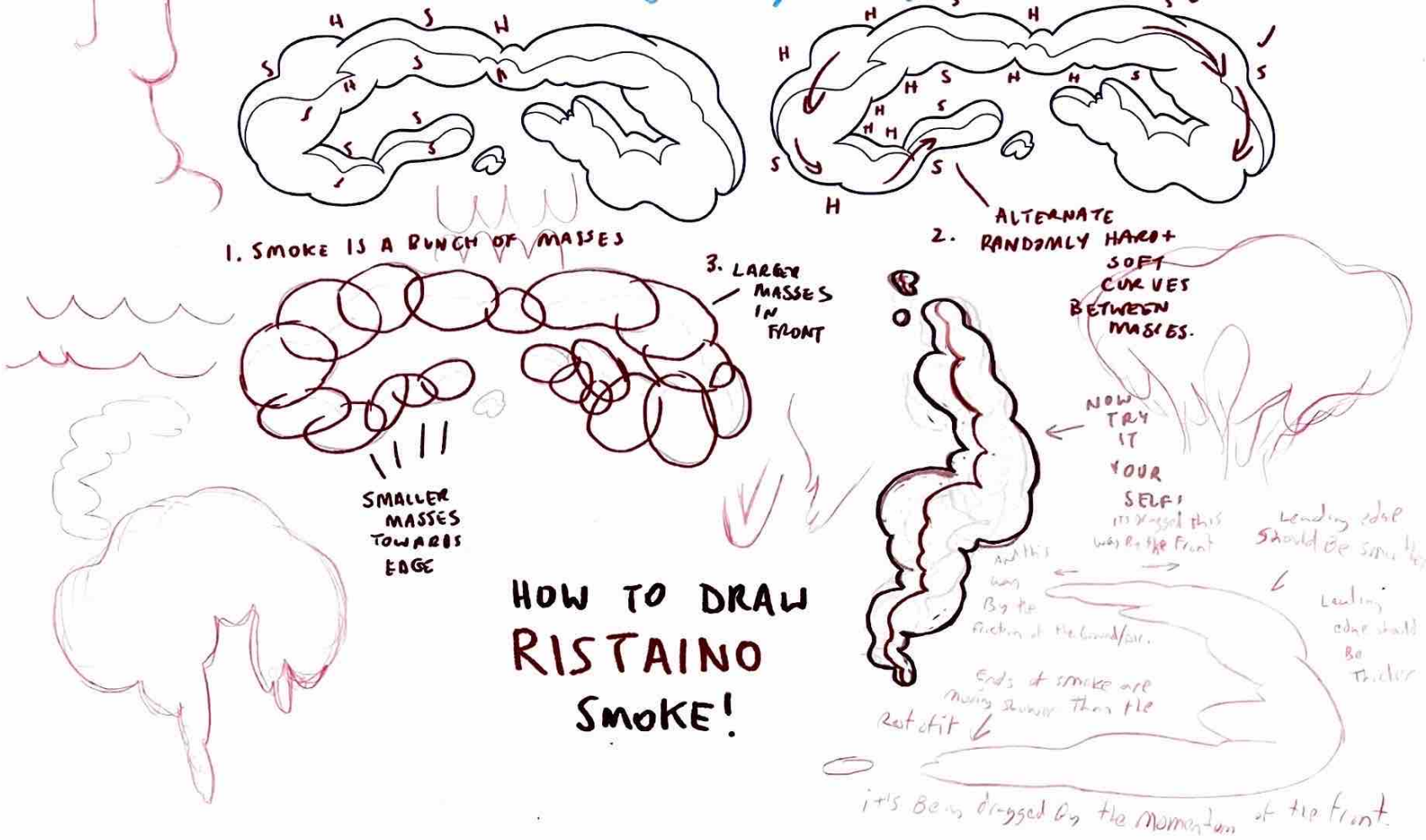
This page: Concept artwork by Thomas Herpich, including the Duchess and Marquis of Nuts from "Duke of Nuts."











(Continued from page 118)

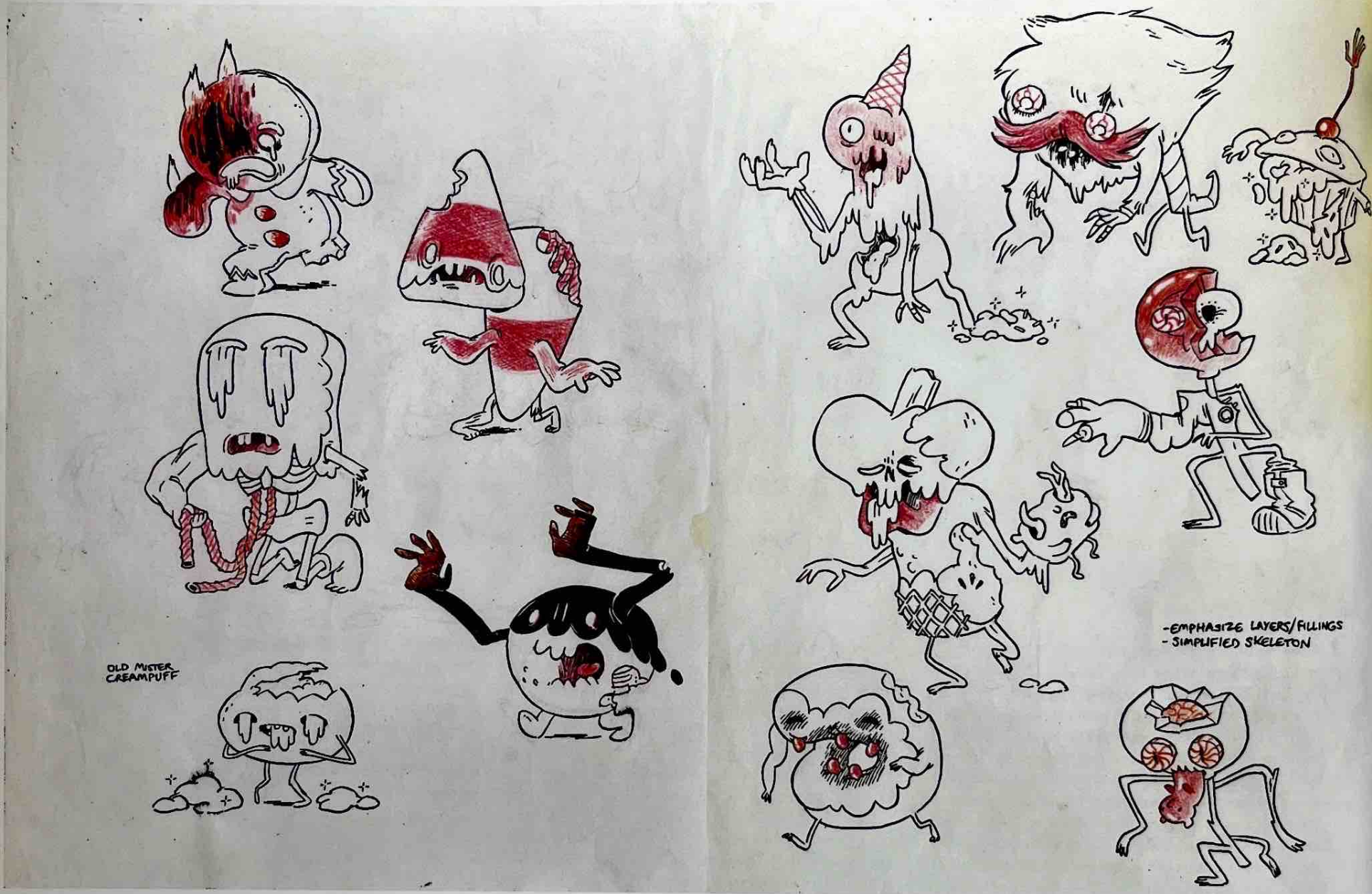
Andy Ristaino: The first season was very important to the look of the show. Phil, Tom, and [designer and storyboard revisionist] Natasha [Allegri] all helped create the visual language of how we handle clouds, hair, rocks, explosions, water, bruises, etc. One of the ways Phil taught me how to draw rips in cloth or hair—designs that are handled in a very naturalistic, asymmetrical, and organic way—to be on-model for the show was to get me to look at the way Pen draws and the rhythm in which he does so. [In this case, the concept of "on-model" means simply that Andy's drawings would fit seamlessly into the broader show's work because he would be drawing specific things like clumps of hair, tears in clothing, lumpy muscles, and twisting clouds in the fashion that Pen had established initially and that had since been interpreted and "tied-down" by Phil, the initial lead character designer.] Once I had a template for how to think about things, I was able to tackle them much more successfully.

Everything on the show is modeled after what they did in season one, whether it's "that's how we do things" or "that's how we no longer do things." That's not to say that the design of the show has stagnated after season one. The visual language of the show is still changing, with new board artists coming in and new designers and new worlds and situations to explore.

(Continued on page 138)

Above: "How to Draw Ristaino Smoke!," a guide on following techniques established under Andy Ristaino's tenure as lead designer before he moved on to storyboards. From the desk of current lead designer, Matt Forsythe, with additional notes written by Andy Ristaino.

CHARACTER CONCEPT ART



Above: Zombie Candy People character design concepts by Adam Muto for "Slumber Party Panic."





BIG DESTINY





Above left: Grassy Wizard concept designs by Erica Jones for "Blade of Grass."

Left: Lady Marauder concept designs by Cole Sanchez for "Bad Little Boy."

Above: Big Destiny concept design by Jesse Moynihan for "Finn the Human."

FIRE KINGDOM CONCEPTS





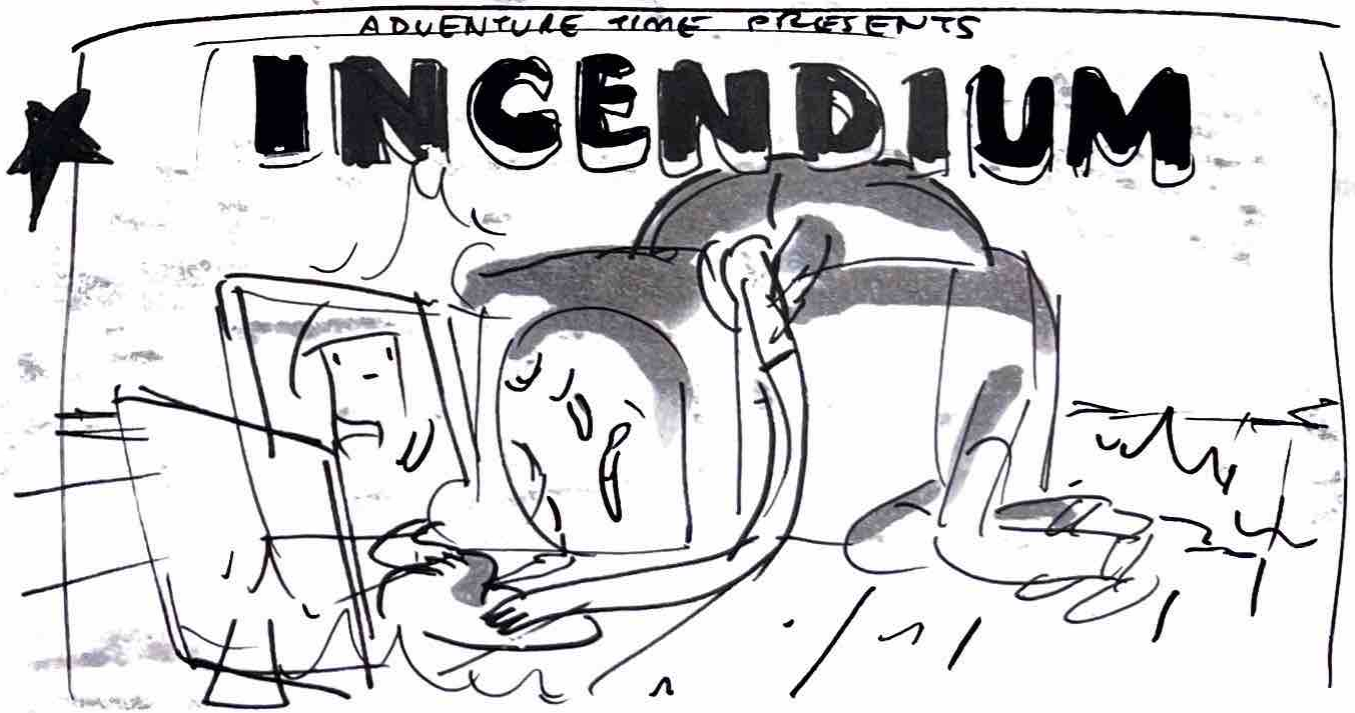
Left: Some of the extensive group of Fire Kingdom residents designed by Andy Ristaino.

Right: "Incendium" title card sketches by Rebecca Sugar. This episode introduced a new romantic interest into Finn's life, the volatile Flame Princess.



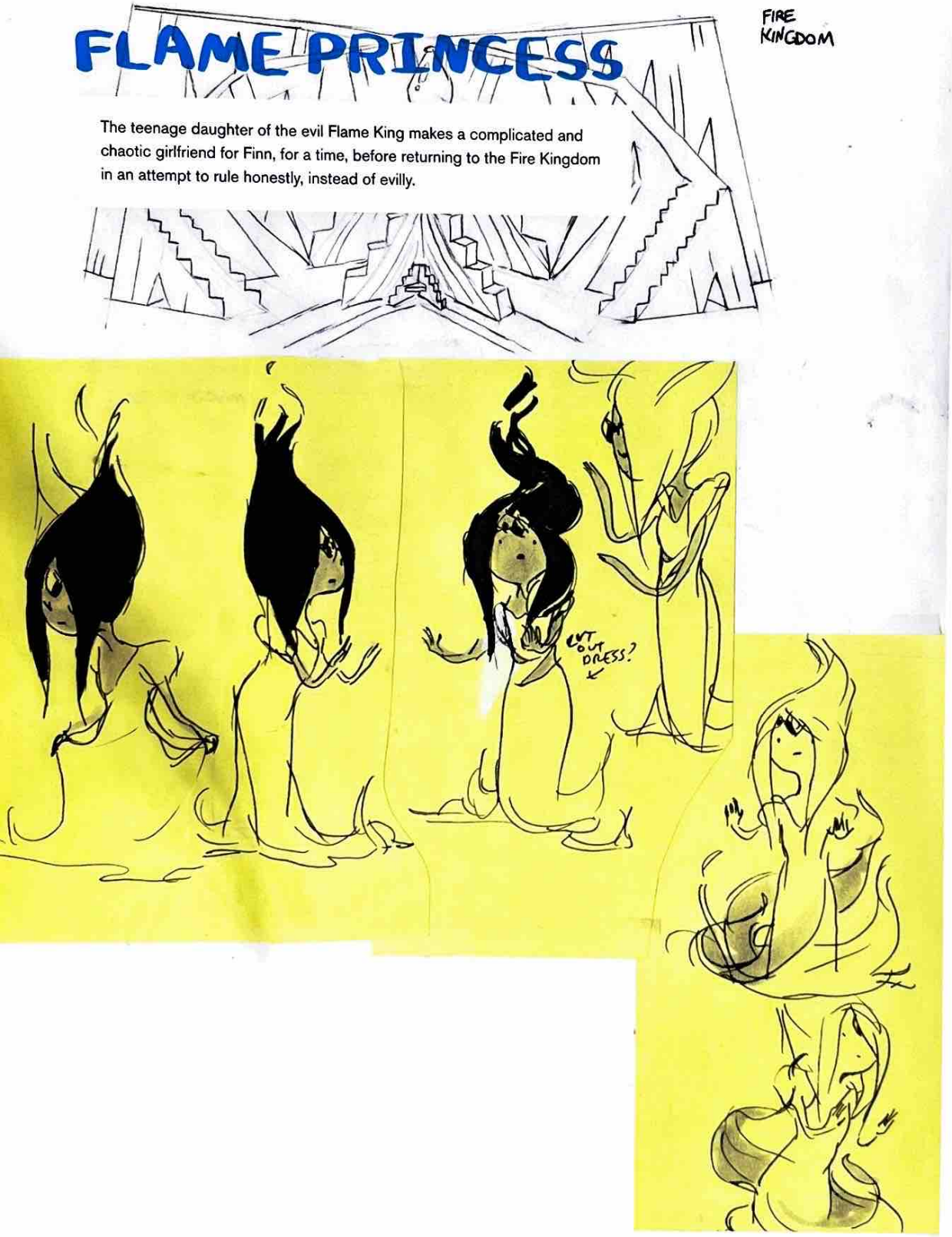






FLAME PRINCESS

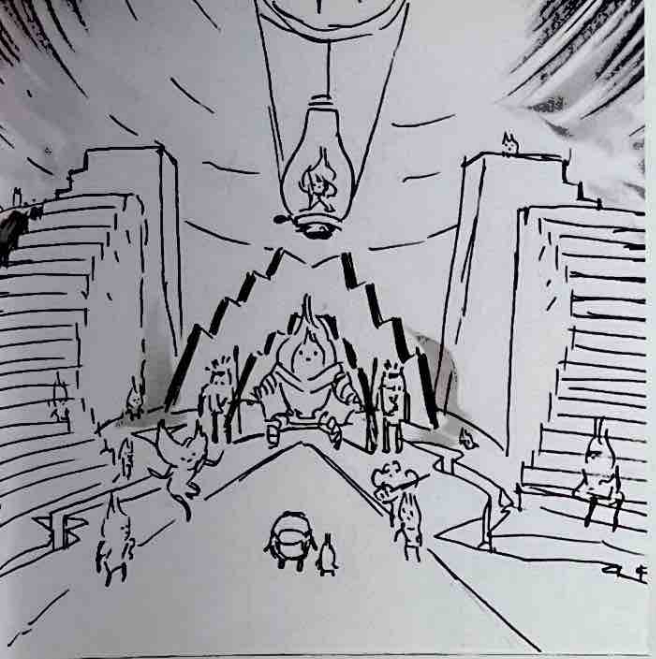
The teenage daughter of the evil Flame King makes a complicated and chaotic girlfriend for Finn, for a time, before returning to the Fire Kingdom in an attempt to rule honestly, instead of evilly.



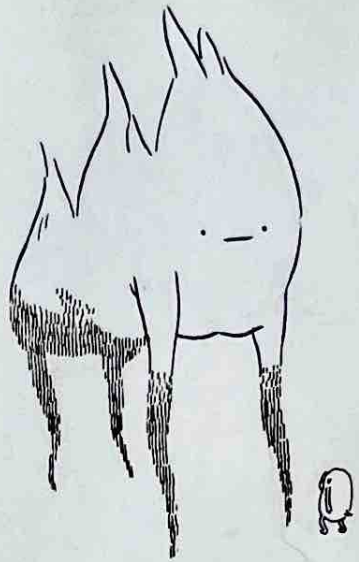


Left: Sketches of Flame Princess by Rebecca Sugar.

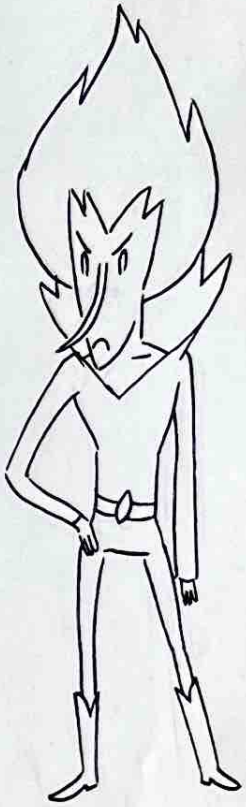
Above: A personal painting of Flame Princess by animatics editor Oliver Akuin. Oliver, on his job responsibilities: "I take the finished storyboards and build a rough movie of what the episode will look like. In Final Cut, I add in all the recorded dialogue, music, and sound effects. It's a fun and creative process! I get to see if the atmosphere and mood is right for the episode. After I'm done with it, the directors and I will look at it many times to see if anything needs to be revised. We check for dialogue alternatives, timing edits, and other fixes to plus the episode. Ultimately, the animatic and the timing sheets become a blueprint to the final animation."







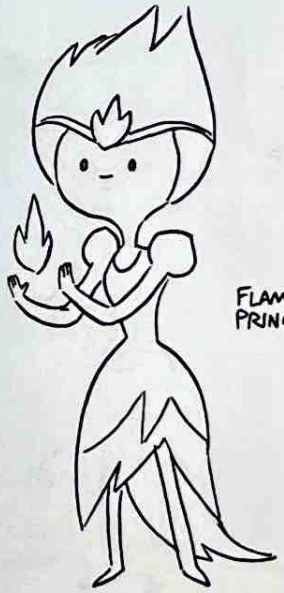




FLAME KING



FIRE OPAL



FLAME PRINCESS







Top: Sketch of the Flame King's throne room with lantern prison for Flame Princess by Rebecca Sugar.

Above: Sketches of Flame Princess by Michelle Xin.

Right: Early Fire Kingdom character development, including a proto–Flame Princess, by Adam Muto.

Voicing Flame Princess:

JESSICA DiCICCO



Jessica DiCicco, voice of Flame Princess, on Finn and Flame Princess's relationship:
Finn and Flame Princess started off with a bang, that's for sure. There was an immediate attraction, and they've had some very profound moments. Even if their relationship seemed rocky at times, they have been getting to know each other's flaws and imperfections, and building the foundation for what could potentially be an epic love story–*The Notebook*–style! Through their ups and downs, I think their feelings for each other were true and undeniable. It's possible they just need to grow as individuals for a little bit before they can become a strong, solid couple. We saw glimpses of their potential, and it's safe to say the seeds for a strong love story have been planted. *OTP.*

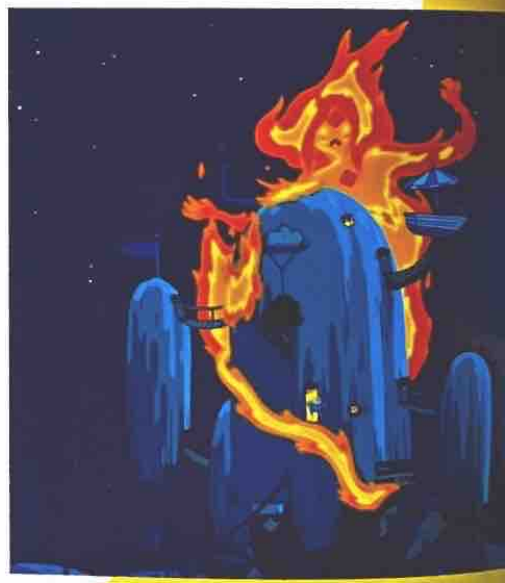
I also think there's a way they could be together without Finn having to foil-burritofy himself. In "The Red Throne," we saw that her handmaid had poisoned Flame Princess, resulting in Finn being able to touch her without getting burned. I think this was foreshadowing that there could be a way Flame Princess can learn to manage her power, and ultimately be able to interact with others without burning them.

I don't think Flame Princess has found the place she can call home, or at least the place where she's happiest and most comfortable. We've only seen her ruling the Fire Kingdom once, where she was poisoned by her handmaid, had to fight her father, then lock him up, not to mention how incredibly bored she looked sitting on the throne all day, Zombie-eyed . . . so I'm not sure if the Fire Kingdom is her final destination. After all, she did spend her whole life locked up in a lantern; it's possible she needs to get out, go on adventures, explore the world, and to get to know herself. As far as things with Finn, timing is everything; maybe after they each get a little more life experience they can explore their relationship again. I don't think it's over between them–perhaps it's just begun.



On Flame Princess's development as a character:
Having been locked up in a lantern for her whole life until only recently, Flame Princess is playing catch-up. She has never had the chance to interact with others, experience love, explore her own emotions, and just be a regular teen. With the help of Princess Bubblegum, she is starting to learn about her power, she's starting to pay attention to her fiery emotions, and is now aware of exploring her power to its full potential. This is an exciting time in Flame Princess's life–she is a strong, independent young lady who tries her best to do what she thinks is right. Nobody's perfect, she definitely has her issues, but she's doing her best and working with what she's got.

On being part of the *Adventure Time* production:
The excitement surrounding *Adventure Time* is palpable, and it's incredible to be part of a show that has struck a chord with so many people. I especially love the show's unpredictability and the dynamic characters that call the Land of Ooo home. Working on this show is awesome.



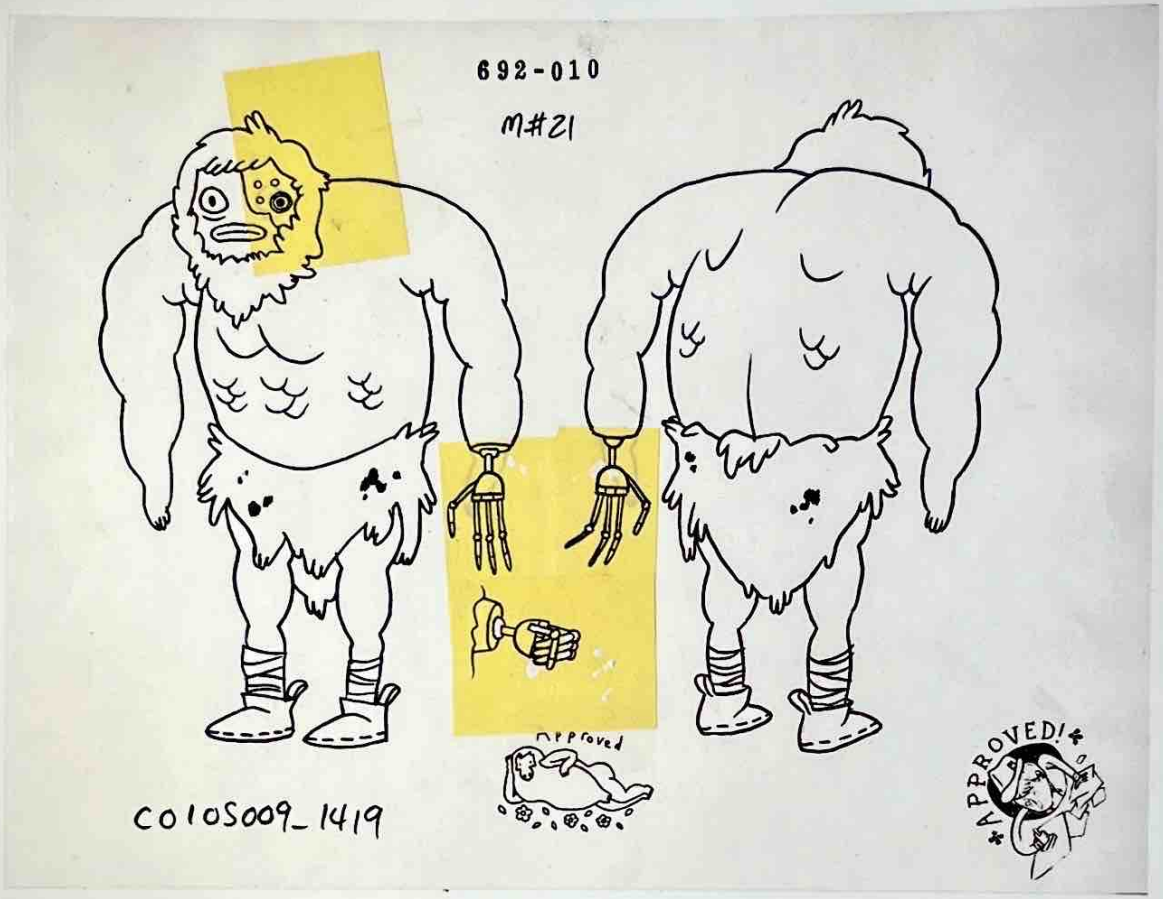


This spread:
Flame Princess is Finn's first age-appropriate love interest, but her fire powers often burn beyond her own control–then burn houses, villages, and forests.

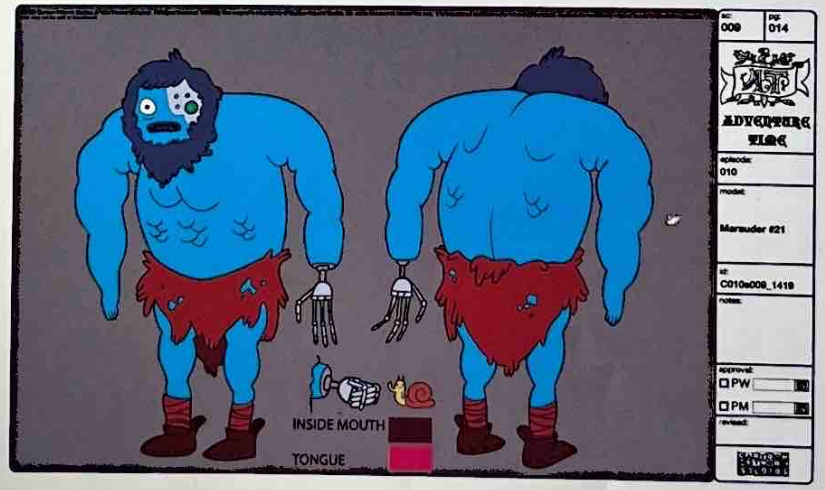

MARAUDERS



This spread: Design models of Marauders from "Memories of Boom Boom Mountain." On Finn's advice, the Marauders strap animals onto themselves to soften the blows of their roughhousing in an attempt to placate Mountain Man, who doesn't like to see all that rough stuff. "It's raunchy and maddening. All those men and their disgusting, fantastic bodies!" Episode character designs by Phil Rynda, Natasha Allegri, and Thomas Herpich, with clean up by Mike Collins and Alex Campos.



Above: A Marauder design from "Memories of Boom Boom Mountain" by Thomas Herpich, with design changes by Pen on the yellow Post-it notes, adding a cyborg faceplate and robotic hand.



Right: The model design for Marauder #21, colored and ready to ship to the animation production studio for use as reference.

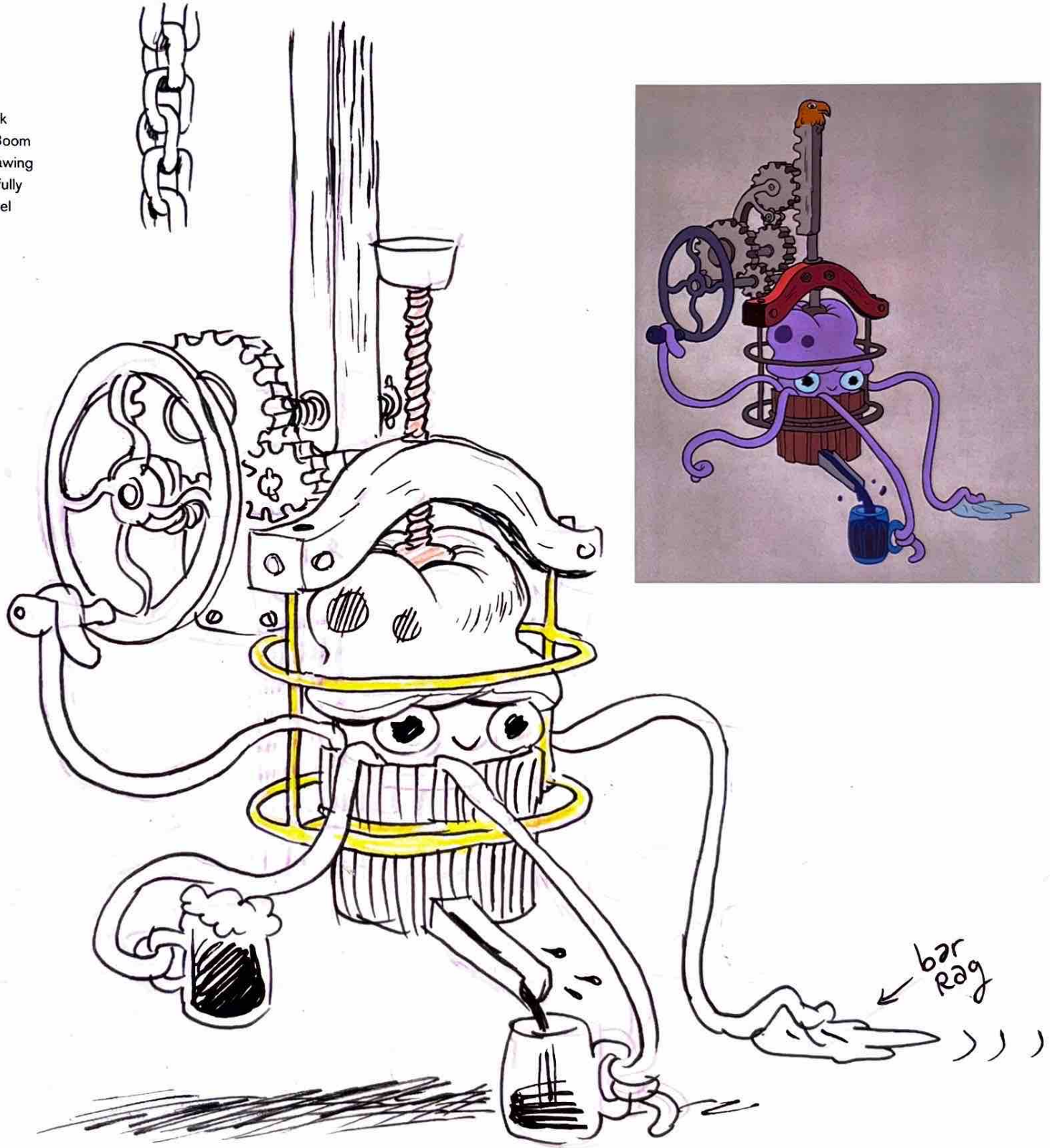
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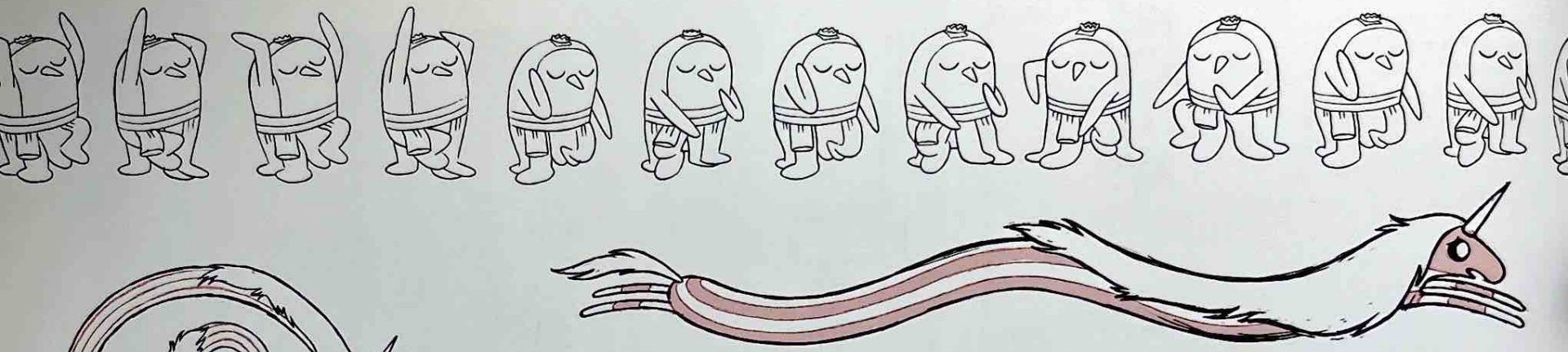
Andy Ristaino (continued): I'm also sure a lot of the choices made regarding what's on-model for the show change depending on who's reviewing the designs. For the first two seasons, Pat reviewed designs. I know he was a lot more of a stickler than Pen was when he was looking over things. Adam reviews everything now; he definitely keys in to different things than Pen did. I'm sure I had a different take on things than Phil, and the same goes for Matt [Forsythe]. The lead designer, over time, gets to know what Adam, Pen, or Pat wants and becomes the "design police," or maybe the "Holden Caulfield of design," hopefully catching the design flaws before they run out of the rye and go over the cliff and out into the world.

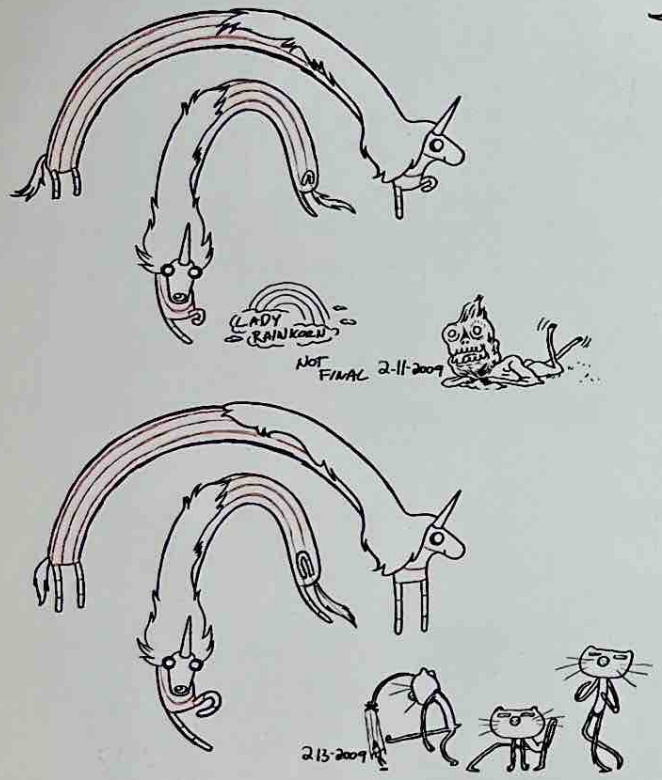
Pat McHale: It was always interesting to see what Pen would change about a design when it ended up on his lap. Oftentimes he would look at the design and sort of frown, and then add a little creature inside Princess Bubblegum's lab coat or something and be like, "Yeah . . . that's better, right?"

Phil Rynda: The job of a character designer or lead character designer has been slightly different for me from show to show. As it pertained to *Adventure Time*, a huge aspect of it, for me, was sort of the job of being a visual translator. In the very beginning, as we were designing the main characters, it was my goal to take all of the exciting and unique things that Pen does naturally in his personal work and begin to translate them into a visual language that people could follow.

This page: The Squid Bartender that serves the Marauders its own squid ink from "Memories of Boom Boom Mountain." The concept drawing by Thomas Herpich is faithfully followed in the design model (inset right).







Above: A few passes at refining Lady Rainicorn's design, from the desk of Phil Rynda, February 2009. The lower example replaces some of the jagged edges in Lady's mane with softer, rounder curves, and her legs are lengthened.

One moment I particularly remember was during our first passes on finalizing Lady Rainicorn. I asked Pen to give me a bunch of drawings of Lady Rainicorn. I took those drawings and began honing them. My first tie-down pass [the cleaned-up, inked version of the rough] had Lady's hair almost matted and dreadlock-like. Pen was pretty weirded out by that and didn't understand why I did that. I told him that I was just following his lead and pointed out the similarities in his sketches and showed him how I interpreted the hair as being matted. Pen told me that Lady's hair should be soft and flowing, so I asked him to draw that for me. Pen again began drawing what looked like clumps of hair to me, but he described the drawing as he did it, and I realized that Pen's actual mark-making was soft and loose. The process in which he was drawing was what was important to him. I then drew what I felt was the graphic interpretation of "flowing hair," and Pen said, "Yeah, like that."

I learned a whole lot about Pen at that moment, and it made me even more excited to be working on the show. Pen's approach to cartooning was extremely personal and emotional, not just visual.

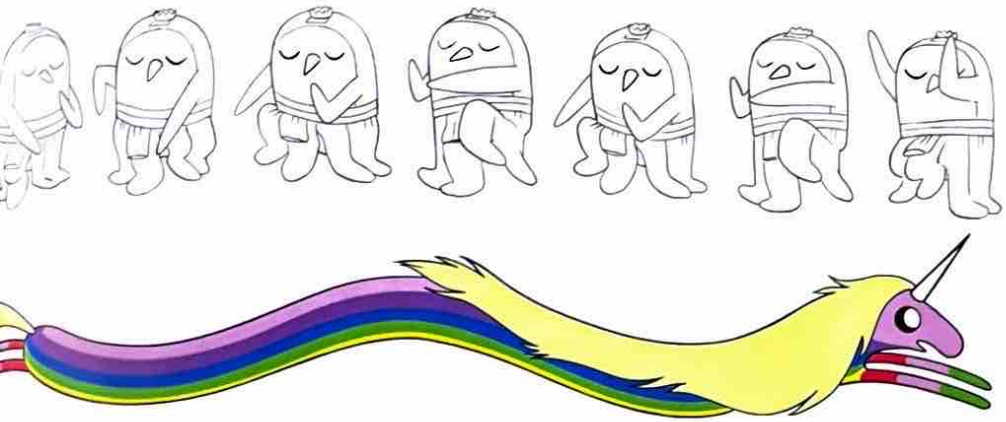
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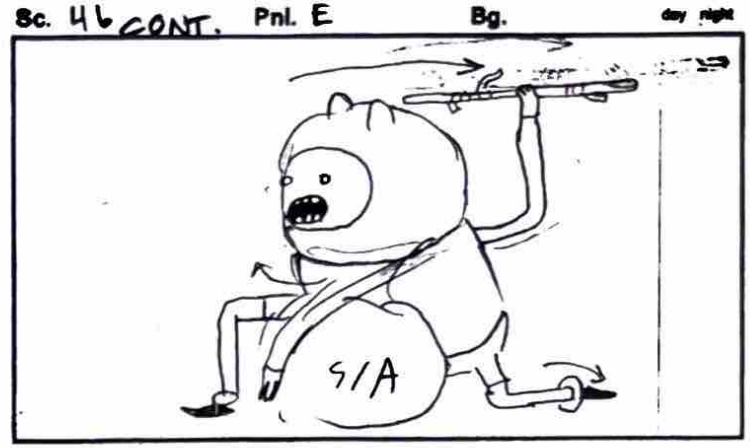
The design department is responsible for preparing the pack of drawings of new character designs and any special poses, effects on, or versions of existing characters for the overseas animation studio that will be doing the actual animation production.

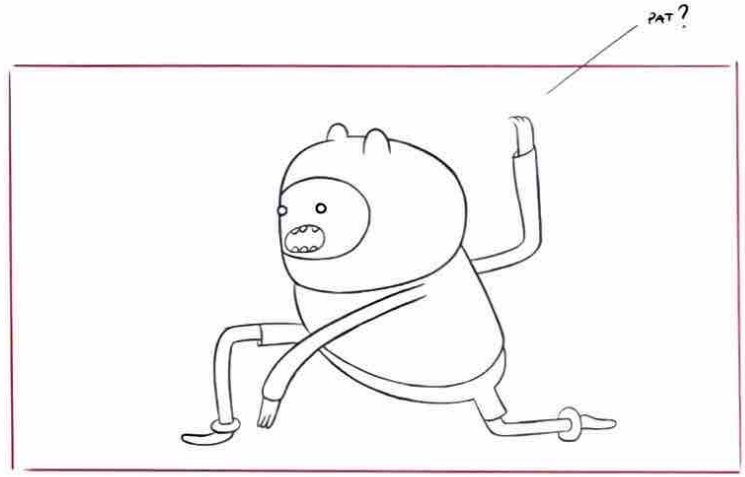
Phil Rynda: The overseas animation process has lots of challenges and hurdles to overcome. One of which is retaining the qualities of the storyboard artists' cartooning but still doing good, attractive drawings. Our major rule [for the animation studios] was to follow the board artists' lead, but make sure that the characters are drawn volumetrically. This was easier said than done.

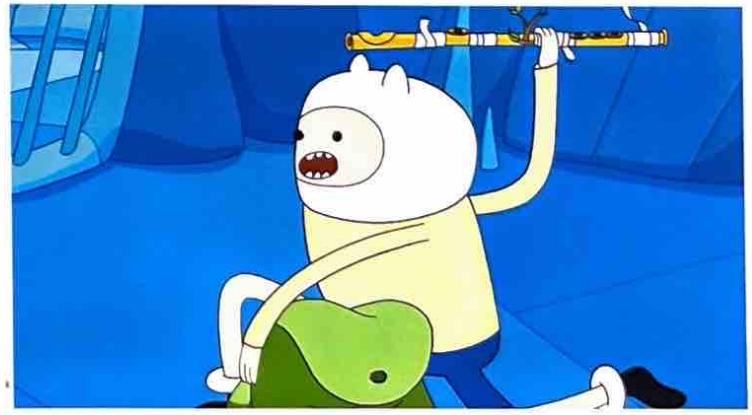
South Korean animation studios Rough Draft and Saerom have both provided animation production work for the show. "Prisoners of Love" was the first episode animated at Saerom, and when the pencil tests came back to Cartoon Network Studios in Burbank, California, some adjustments in direction needed to be made. Typically, television cartoon productions send overseas animation studios model packs of each character, specific props, and location designs with the intention that the overseas artists follow them faithfully, hence the term "on-model." Although the *Adventure Time* production had provided the animation studio with character model sheets (as is standard practice), in this case, they were only intended to be used as reference.

Phil Rynda: The models were a guide, not a rule. I think somewhere I wrote the phrase on there to make the drawings "in character" as opposed to "on-model." That's what's most important about drawing our characters. I made some drawings in response to "Prisoners of Love." It showed how we would interpret









the board drawings . . . retaining the good, the bad, and the ugly of the boards while still honoring our show style. I called it "iconic-organic" in a big art presentation we had to make to the Cartoon Network executives—they love that sort of thing.

Specifically, there's a storyboard drawing from "Prisoners" where Finn is throwing his flute; it was a Pen drawing, a really weird drawing of Finn. It had a bulbous head, and [the animation studio] sent us back pencil tests where they put it all on-model and fixed it, and it just lost everything. So I did a drawing that was like, "No, let's just use this weird Finn that we've never seen before . . . it's got all the same pieces, you've just got to construct them slightly differently." And then we sent that back, and I think that was a big breakthrough for the animation studios, and for us, too. [The issue was] "How do we communicate that we want them to follow the boards in an attractive way?"

Funny trumps everything. It's funny, so why change it? 'Cause if I'm going to change it, it's not going to be funny anymore. So leave it, so it adds a second, new layer. This show helped me change my thinking about cartooning.

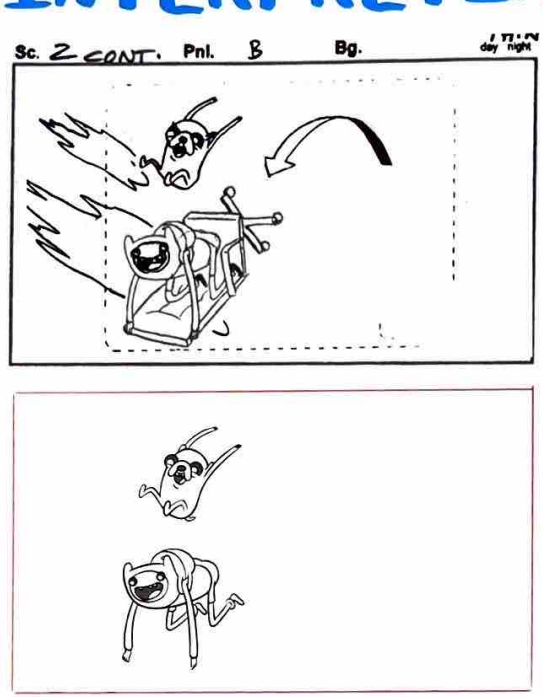


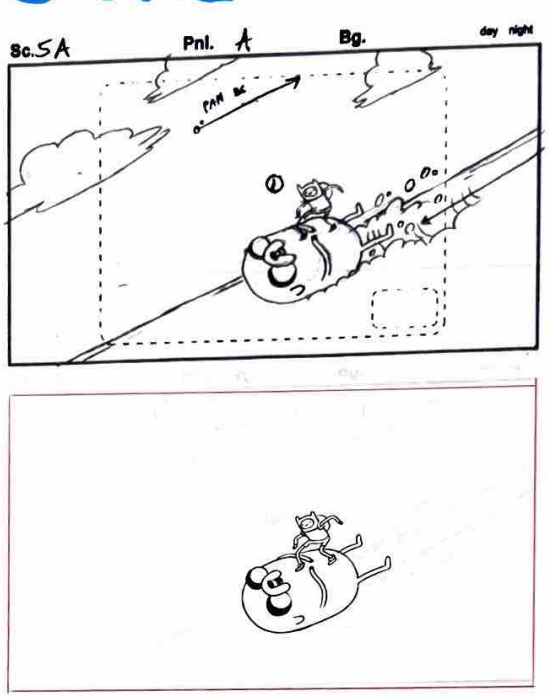
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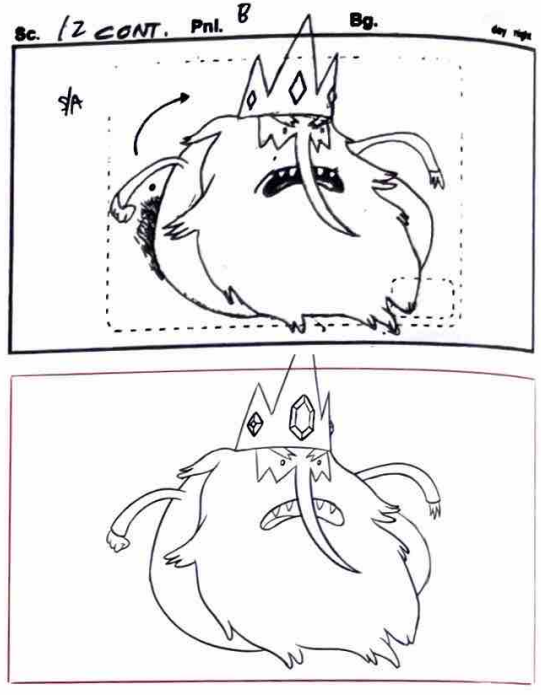
Top: "I still try to sneak in some animation now and then just to keep things specific. Like this Gunter dance cycle from 'Princess Potluck.' Those dance moves were lifted from a school friend, Adrian Molina's personal work." –Adam Muto

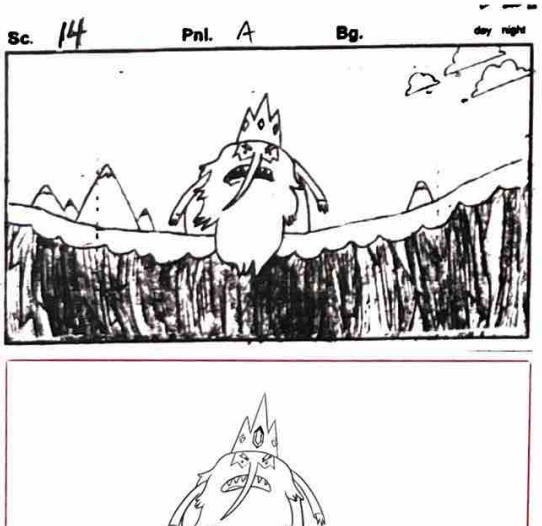
Right: The original Pen storyboard panel with a unique Finn drawing, the clean-up drawing by Phil Rynda used as an example for the overseas animation studio on how to interpret any strange drawings that they encounter in the boards, and the resulting frame from the episode "Prisoners of Love," retaining the flavor of the original.

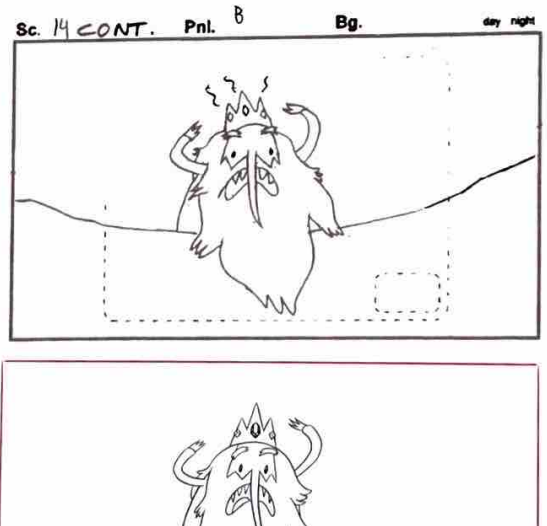
INTERPRETING THE BOARDS



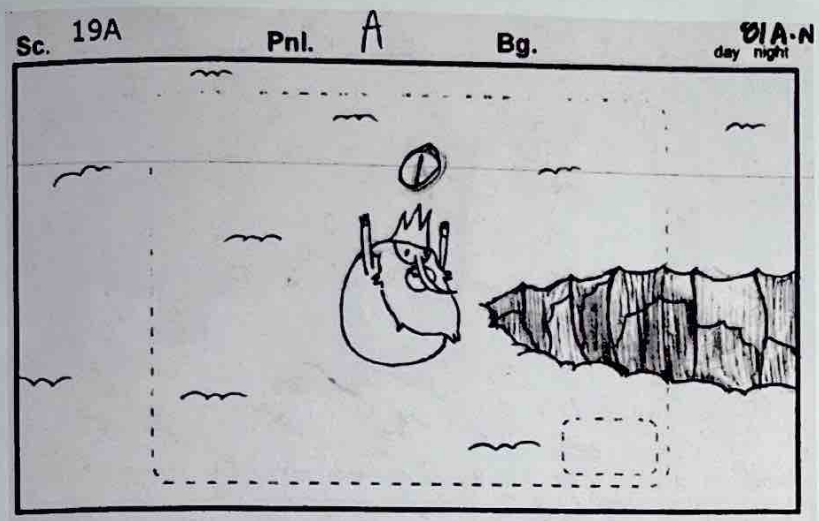




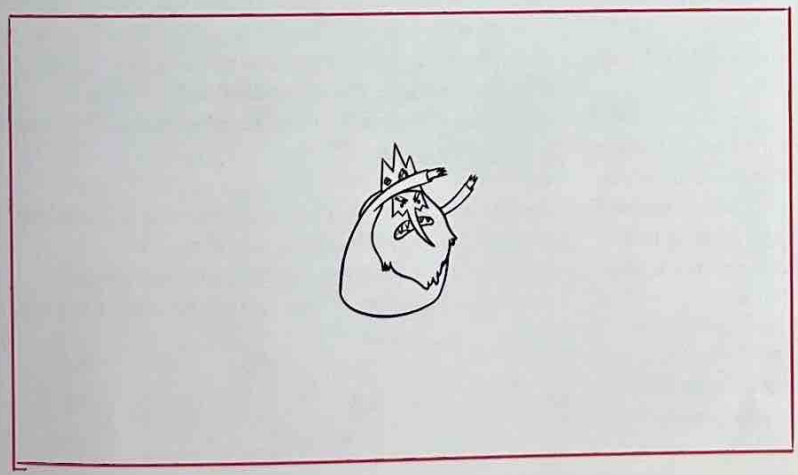


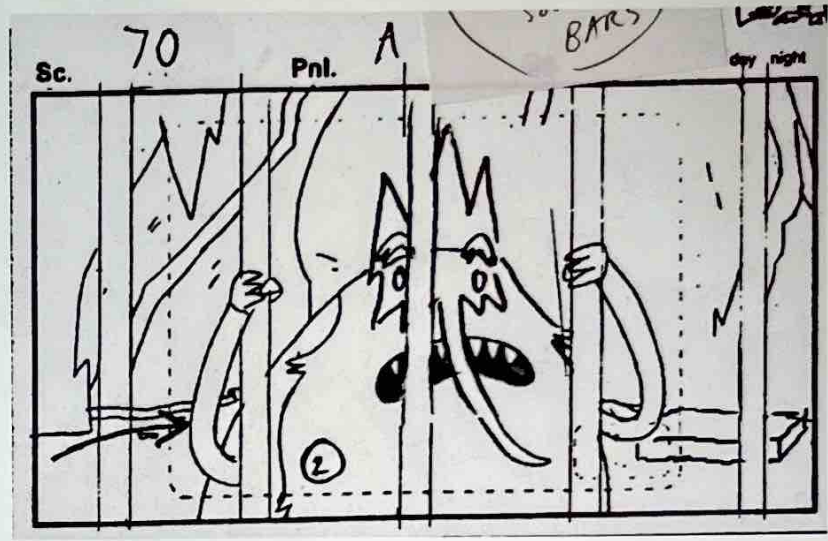


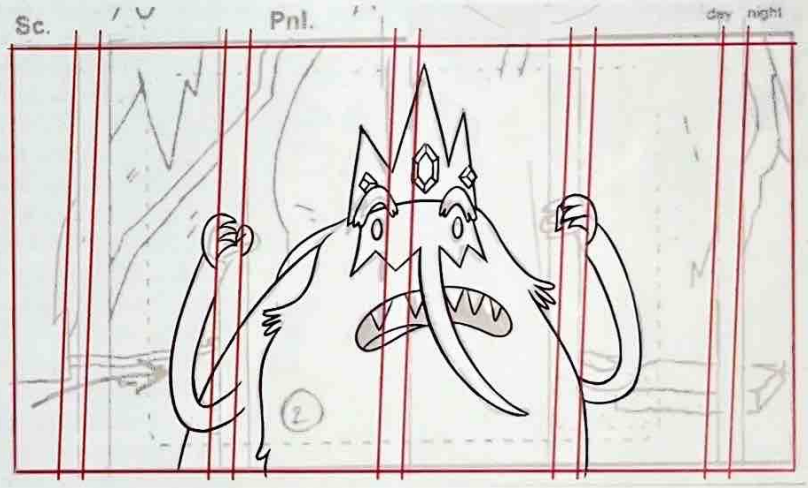
This spread: Continued from the previous page, additional storyboard panels paired with cleaned-up drawings from "Prisoners of Love" as examples for the overseas animation studios of how to interpret the individual board artist drawings and retain the essential humor and eccentric qualities of each. Storyboard panels are clean-up drawings by Adam Muto based on Pen's thumbnail boards. Red-outlined panels are the inked examples by Phil Rynda.

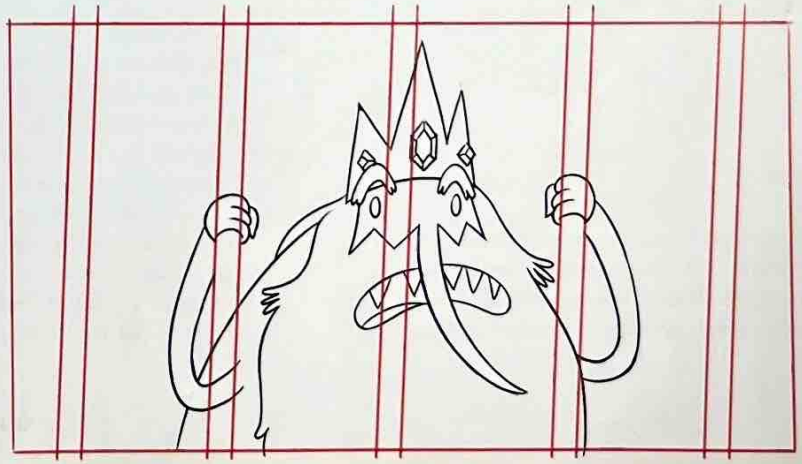

Sc. 19A
Pnl. A
Bg.
day night

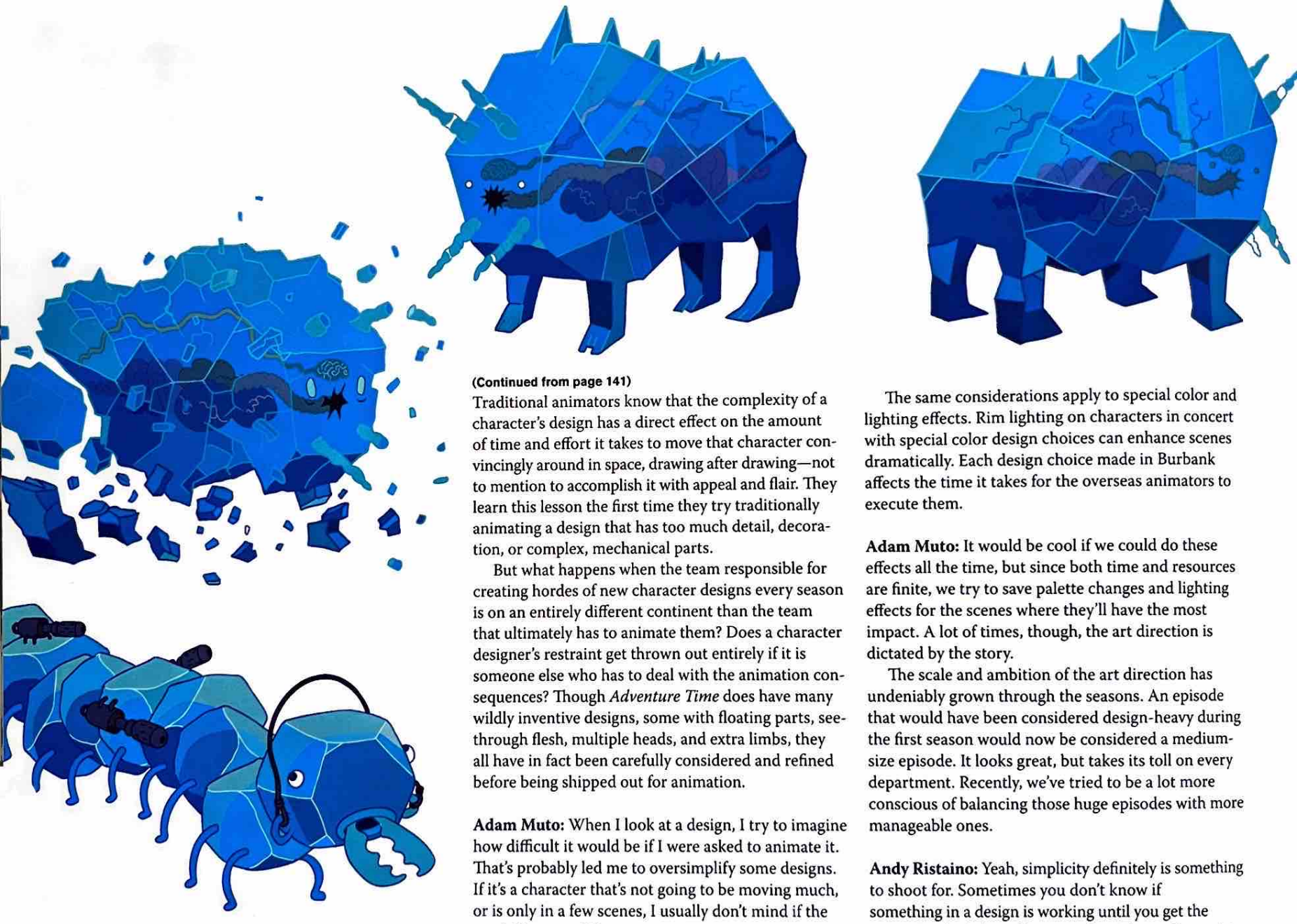

IK: * BABBLING*
WHAT?! I am the KING! I am the king of ccc-cool!
Agh! GUH! MMMM! THAT'S IT!
JUL 21 2009




Sc. 70
Pnl. A
day night


Sc.
Pnl.
day night





This page: The Ice Bull and Ice-o-pede from "What Is Life" exhibiting complex designs with transparent bodies, multiple reflective planes, visible internal organs, and directional lighting.

(Continued from page 141)

Traditional animators know that the complexity of a character's design has a direct effect on the amount of time and effort it takes to move that character convincingly around in space, drawing after drawing—not to mention to accomplish it with appeal and flair. They learn this lesson the first time they try traditionally animating a design that has too much detail, decoration, or complex, mechanical parts.

But what happens when the team responsible for creating hordes of new character designs every season is on an entirely different continent than the team that ultimately has to animate them? Does a character designer's restraint get thrown out entirely if it is someone else who has to deal with the animation consequences? Though *Adventure Time* does have many wildly inventive designs, some with floating parts, see-through flesh, multiple heads, and extra limbs, they all have in fact been carefully considered and refined before being shipped out for animation.

Adam Muto: When I look at a design, I try to imagine how difficult it would be if I were asked to animate it. That's probably led me to oversimplify some designs. If it's a character that's not going to be moving much, or is only in a few scenes, I usually don't mind if the model is more elaborate.

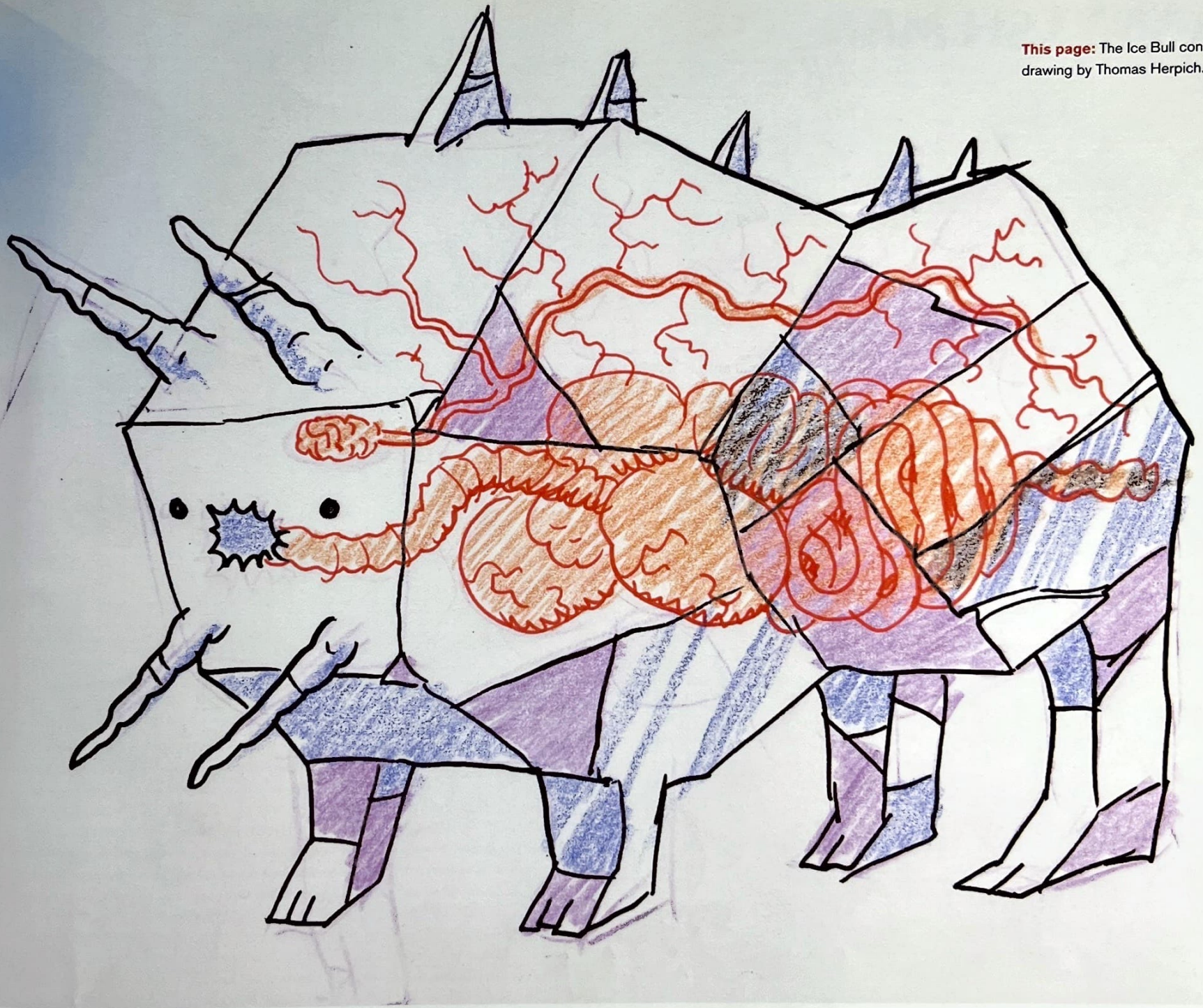
There's definitely a correlation between design complexity and the fluidity of its execution. We haven't had an overseas studio reject a character model outright. But if a design is overly complex, it will come back with some stiffness.

The same considerations apply to special color and lighting effects. Rim lighting on characters in concert with special color design choices can enhance scenes dramatically. Each design choice made in Burbank affects the time it takes for the overseas animators to execute them.

Adam Muto: It would be cool if we could do these effects all the time, but since both time and resources are finite, we try to save palette changes and lighting effects for the scenes where they'll have the most impact. A lot of times, though, the art direction is dictated by the story.

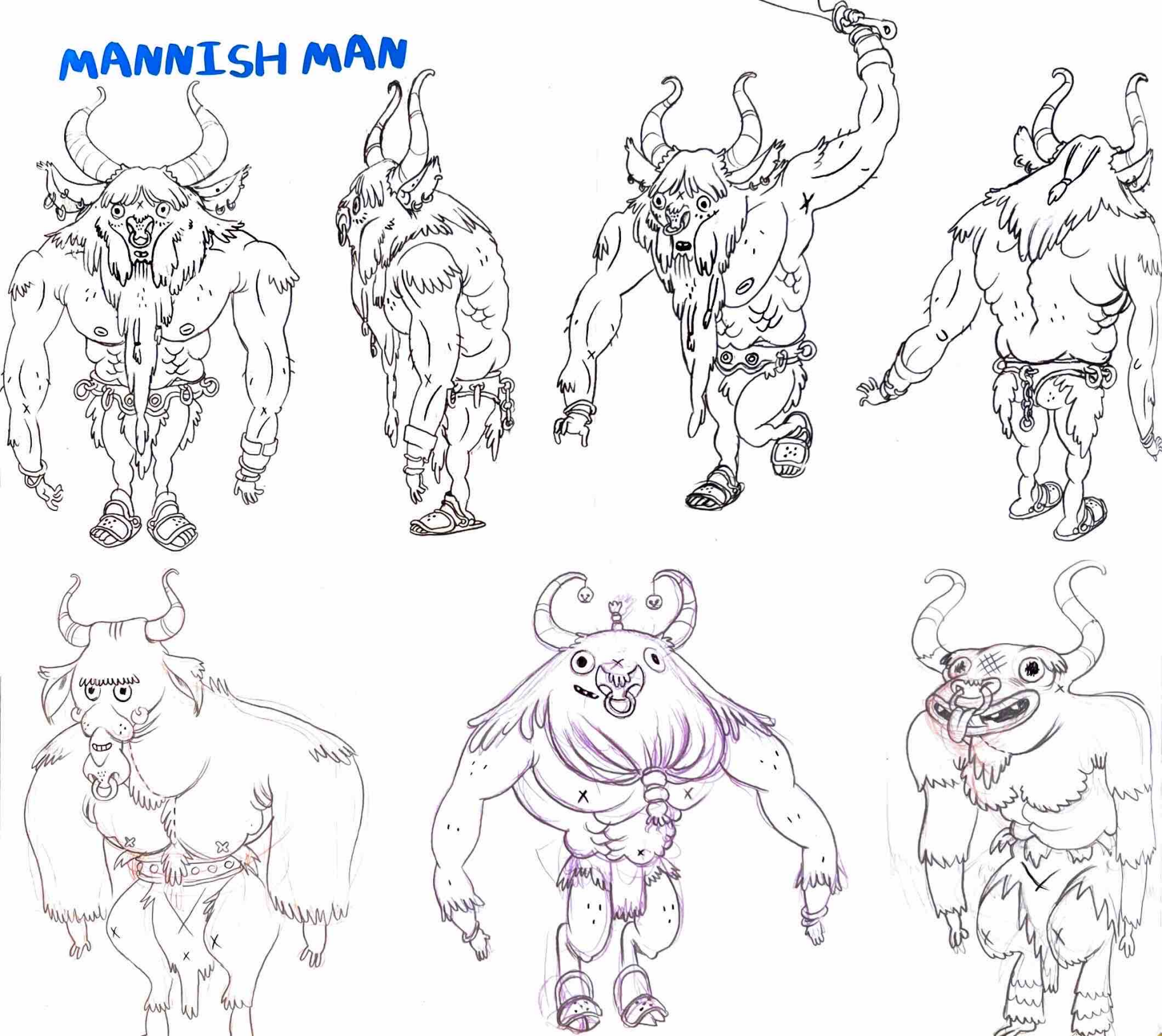
The scale and ambition of the art direction has undeniably grown through the seasons. An episode that would have been considered design-heavy during the first season would now be considered a medium-size episode. It looks great, but takes its toll on every department. Recently, we've tried to be a lot more conscious of balancing those huge episodes with more manageable ones.

Andy Ristaino: Yeah, simplicity definitely is something to shoot for. Sometimes you don't know if something in a design is working until you get the animation back from Korea . . . then it's usually too late.



This page: The Ice Bull concept drawing by Thomas Herpich.

MANNISH MAN







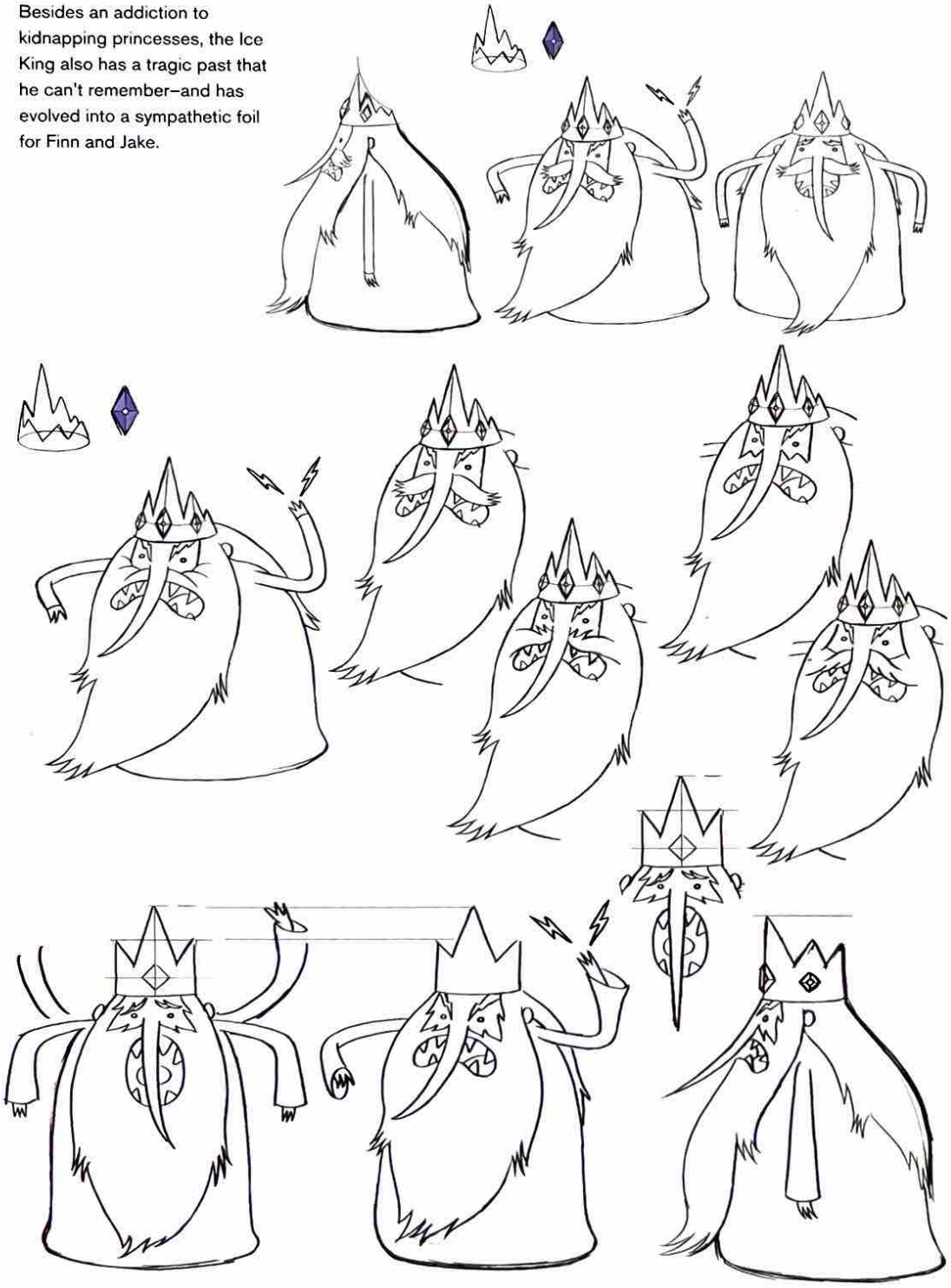
This spread: Mannish Man the Minotaur concepts by Thomas Herpich for "The Enchiridion!" "I think this might be my very first character design—maybe from my first day working on the show. Definitely within the first couple weeks. I didn't really have much of an idea of what the job really was yet, plus there were some hiccups in the production, so we had a lot of extra time on these first couple episodes. So I think this stuff came from Phil just telling me to go nuts and have fun. I didn't realize at the time that all this stuff was impossibly complicated, plus strayed so far from the original storyboard drawings that it would've all had to be reboarded to use these designs. I think even the final one, after all the far-out stuff had been shot down, ended up being too complex and too far off-board, and needed a lot of retakes in the animation later on. If I got the assignment now, he'd end up looking a lot closer to how he does in the board, for better or worse. This was the problem, this superfluous inventive energy, that eventually got solved by my doing tons of concept drawings for episodes in the works."

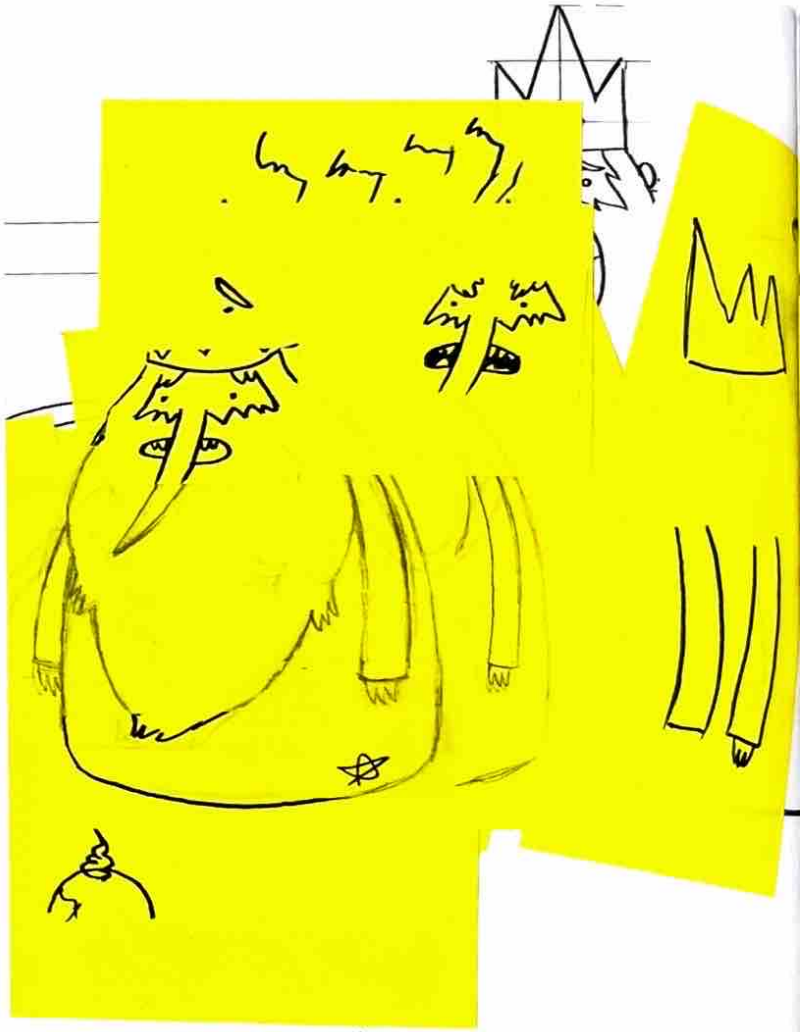




ICE KING

Besides an addiction to kidnapping princesses, the Ice King also has a tragic past that he can't remember–and has evolved into a sympathetic foil for Finn and Jake.





Left: Ice King design iterations by Phil Rynda from early in show production reveal that mustache options were briefly experimented with.

Above: Post-it-note corrections can stack up high. Here, Pen draws design suggestions over the model drawings indicating his direction to the designers.

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sc: 117 | pg: 187

ADVENTURE TIME

episode: 069

model: Young Ice King With Crown

id: C069s117_746

notes:





Above: Design models of Simon Petrikov's stages of deterioration into the Ice King as a result of the crown's powers. Ultimately, Simon loses all control over his mind and slips permanently into being Ice King for more than one thousand years until the time of Finn and Jake.

Right: Ice King concept sketches by Pen.



Voicing Ice King/Simon Petrikov:

TOM KENNY



Tom Kenny, voice of Ice King/Simon Petrikov, on how he personally can relate to the character:

You gotta feel sorry for Simon. First of all, the crown stole his sanity from him. This gentle, sweet, low-key guy became the lonely megalomaniacal Ice King. He didn't *ask* for it. Ever since I was a little kid, I've always had a soft spot for the classic Universal Studios monsters because they're despised for things that aren't their fault! The Frankenstein monster didn't ask to be made; Larry Talbot became the Wolf Man when he was on a date. . . . A werewolf randomly attacked him–ruining both the date and his life! Dracula doesn't *want* to live forever; deep down he wants to die ASAP. The Creature is just protecting his Black Lagoon from these interlopers, these irritating, arrogant scientists. So I have a lot of empathy for the Ice King, because he's cut from the same cloth as those poor slobs. Plus, odds are that I'll end up a crazy old man someday myself!

The other aspect of Ice King's personality is that he's his own worst enemy and always shoots himself in the foot. He has no idea anymore of how to be a friend, a husband, a father figure–so he blows it every time! He doesn't understand social cues or personal boundaries. So, he locks up princesses and can't understand why they don't love that. He tries too hard and drives everybody nuts. He's an often cold and controlling parent to Gunther and the penguins.

But beneath all of that, there's Simon, who was a nice man. Ice King would love to be a normal guy with "bros," a girlfriend who loves him back, and kids (or penguins) that he parents. He just can't remember how to achieve any of that. That's my theory anyway. Great–now I've made myself all sad.

On the unexpectedly poignant moments in episodes such as "Simon and Marcy":

Episodes like that one are so neat to be a part of. I'm amazed at the number of people who tell me those "Simon and Marcy" stories brought them to tears! Heavy, baby.

I was very surprised and gratified when Simon's story took such an unexpectedly deep turn. I felt like Pendleton and his creative team had given me this huge gift! To be able to play the comedy, but this *other* thing, too.

The funny thing is, even before that happened in the show (in fact, way back when I was auditioning), I had always approached the character as if he was one of these sad sickos you see on MSNBC's *Lockup*, who (often due to tragic and horrible stuff that happened to them during their formative years) just don't see the forest for the trees. You can't help but have a pang of sympathy for them because they're so clueless. That was just my private process, though–I never really mentioned any of my crackpot theories out loud. I didn't want to seem too "actor-y." Turns out that the writers were on the same road I was!

On what the Ice King smells like:

I imagine that the Ice King's effluvium is a pungent mixture of odors: winter wind, penguin musk, and patchouli oil, with just a hint of desperate flop sweat.

On what the future could hold for *Adventure Time*:

Well, I always think it's a fool's errand to try and extrapolate into the future like that. I'm usually wrong–my crystal-ball skills suck.

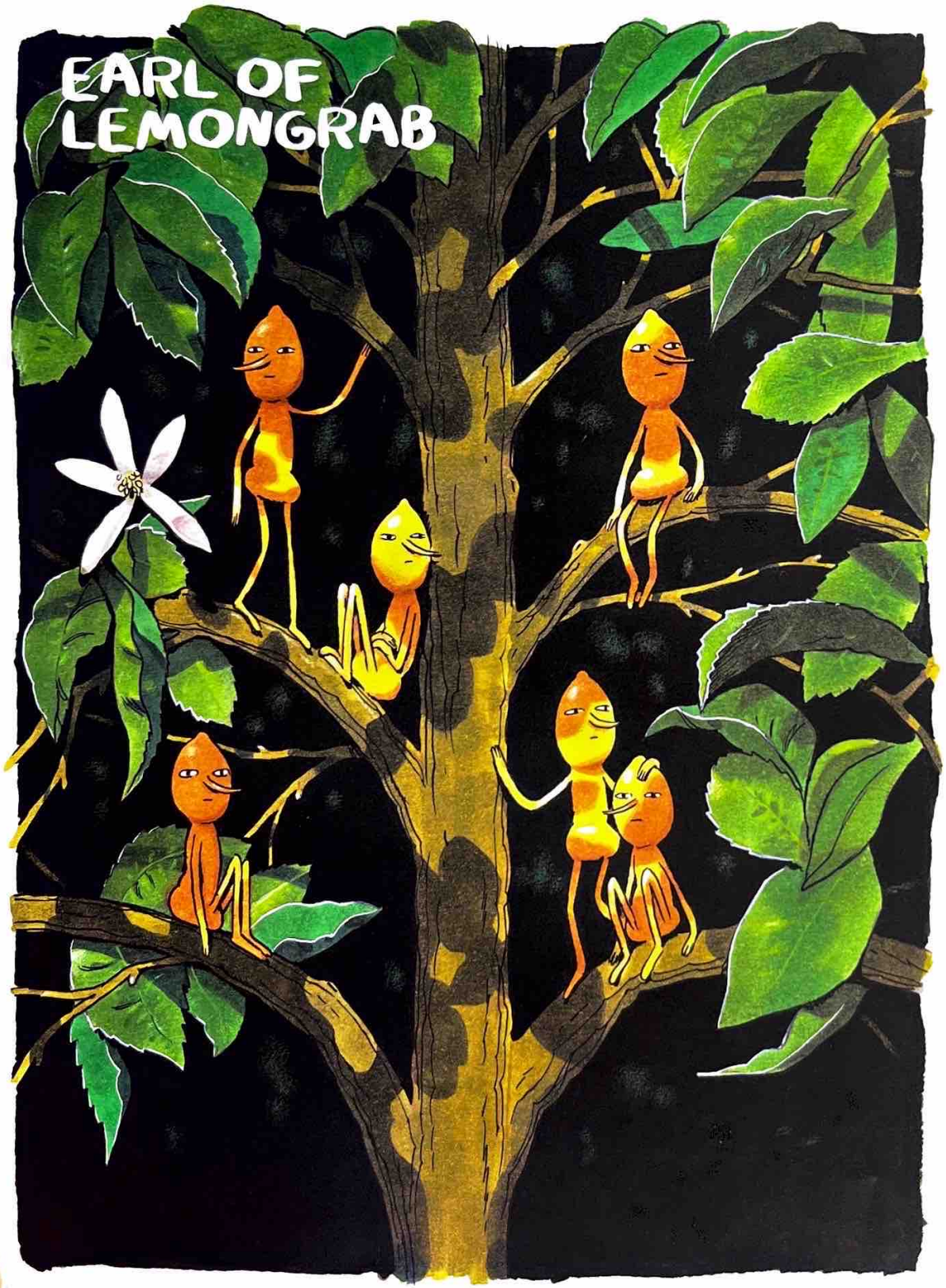
I *do* believe that *Adventure Time* has already transcended what most TV cartoons achieve. The fans connect with it on a very deep level, and the world of Ooo and all its inhabitants are so wide and deep and complex that I can tell there are hundreds of stories yet to be told, and a zillion depths yet to be plumbed.

It's important to remember that for such a complicated show, what makes it all tick is deceptively simple. The heart of the whole thing is Finn and Jake. Their funny, easygoing, really believable friendship is what everything else springs from. If that aspect didn't work, there'd be no *Adventure Time*. Finn and Jake are our guides through all of this craziness. No matter what setting you put them in they're great characters. Even with all the complex, arcane, self-referential mythology that's developed around them, it's still a show about the deep friendship between this scrappy kid and this wiseacre dog!





This spread:
Some of Ice King's adventures. Ice King's loneliness feeds his desire to spend time with princesses, Finn and Jake, and his wizard peers–though usually he is unwelcome to do so.

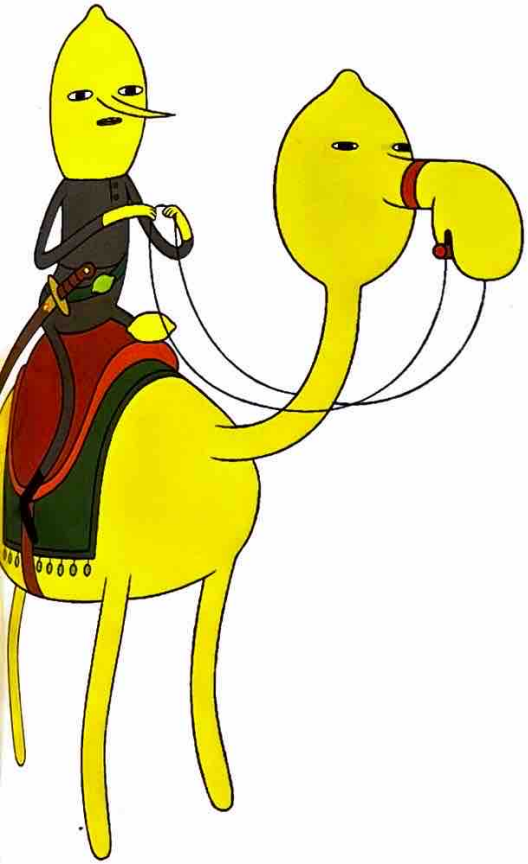




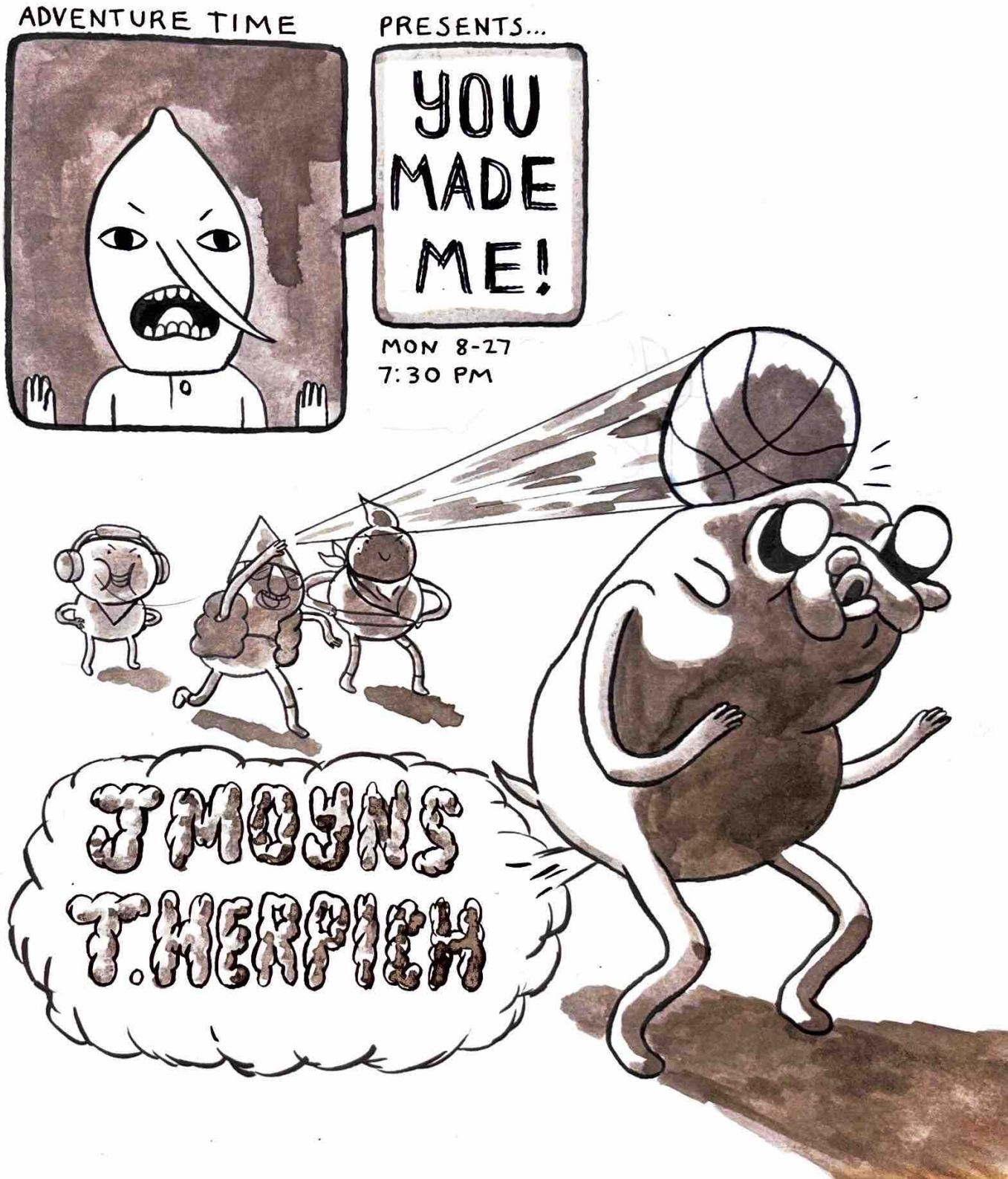
Lemongrab is the shrieking being created in Princess Bubblegum's laboratory. He has a difficult personality and a habit of meting out extended dungeon sentences for transgressions as minor as hurt feelings. After unsuccessful attempts at integrating into the Candy Kingdom, he was given his own lonely earldom to rule, and eventually, a partner, Lemongrab 2. Together, they filled their domain with synthesized lemon mutants.

Left: "Lemon Tree" by Thomas Herpich, created for an *Adventure Time*–themed group art show. Says Herpich, "But then I liked it too much and didn't want to sell it, so I gave it to my brother instead."

Above: One of the earliest drawings of Lemongrab, by Thomas Herpich and Jesse Moynihan.



Above: Color model poses of Lemongrab 2 from "You Made Me!" and Lemongrab mounted on a Lemon Horse from "Too Young."



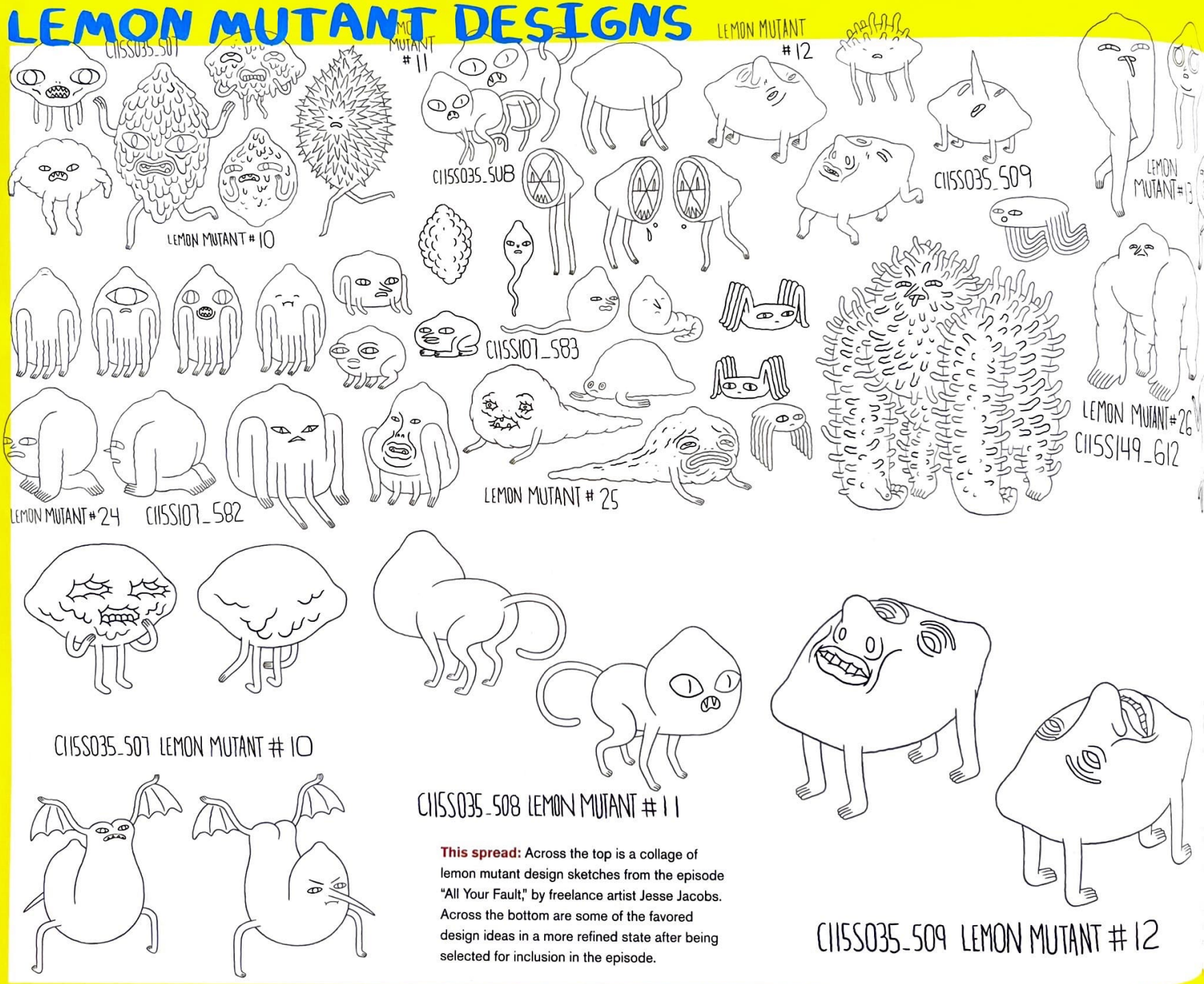
Right: An unofficial promotional drawing for the episode "You Made Me!" by Jesse Moynihan. This episode was co-storyboarded by Thomas Herpich.





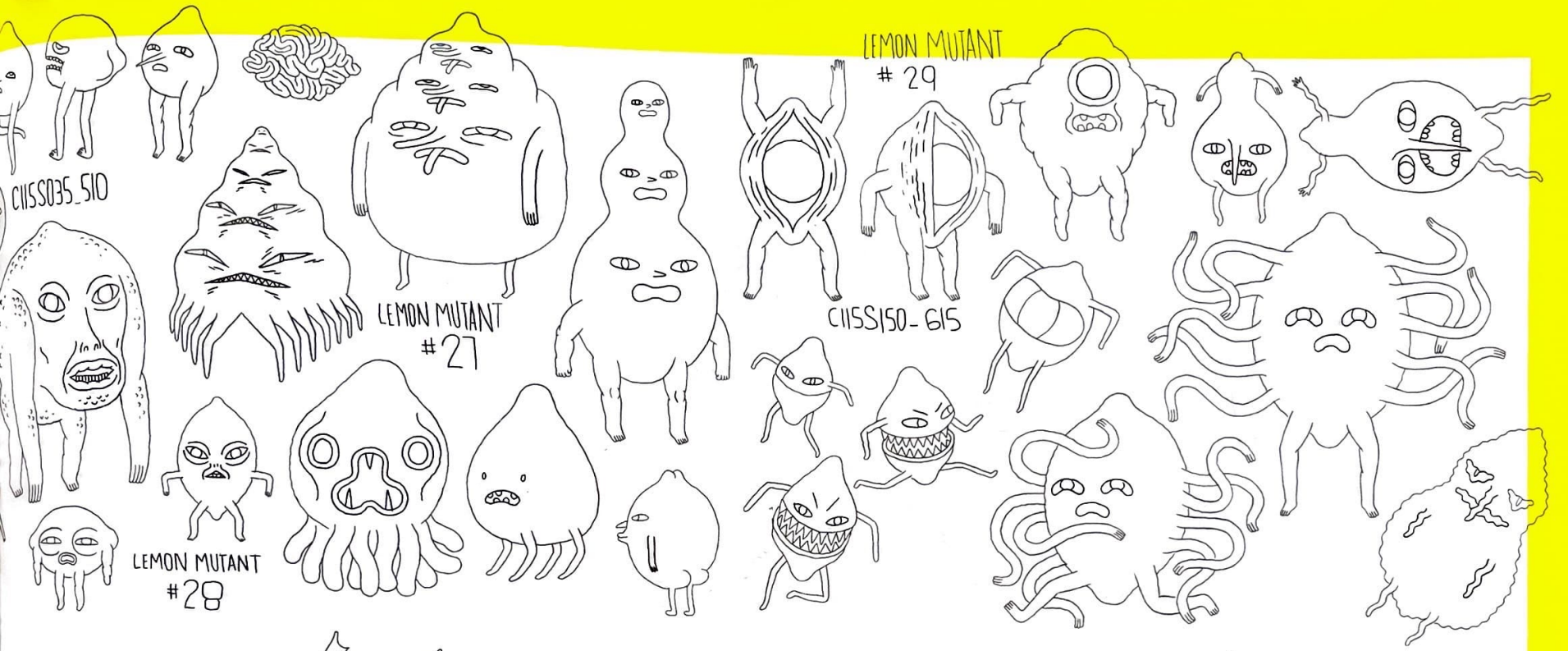
This spread: Lemongrab and Lemongrab 2 populated their castle with lemon mutants created from the lifetime supply of candy food that Princess Bubblegum had provided for them instead of eating it. Here is a collage of various design models of the Lemongrabs and their people.

LEMON MUTANT DESIGNS



This spread: Across the top is a collage of lemon mutant design sketches from the episode "All Your Fault," by freelance artist Jesse Jacobs. Across the bottom are some of the favored design ideas in a more refined state after being selected for inclusion in the episode.

C115S033_491 BIRDO #1





C115S033_491 BIRDO # 1



C115S033_492 BIRDO # 2

Voicing Lemongrab:

JUSTIN ROILAND

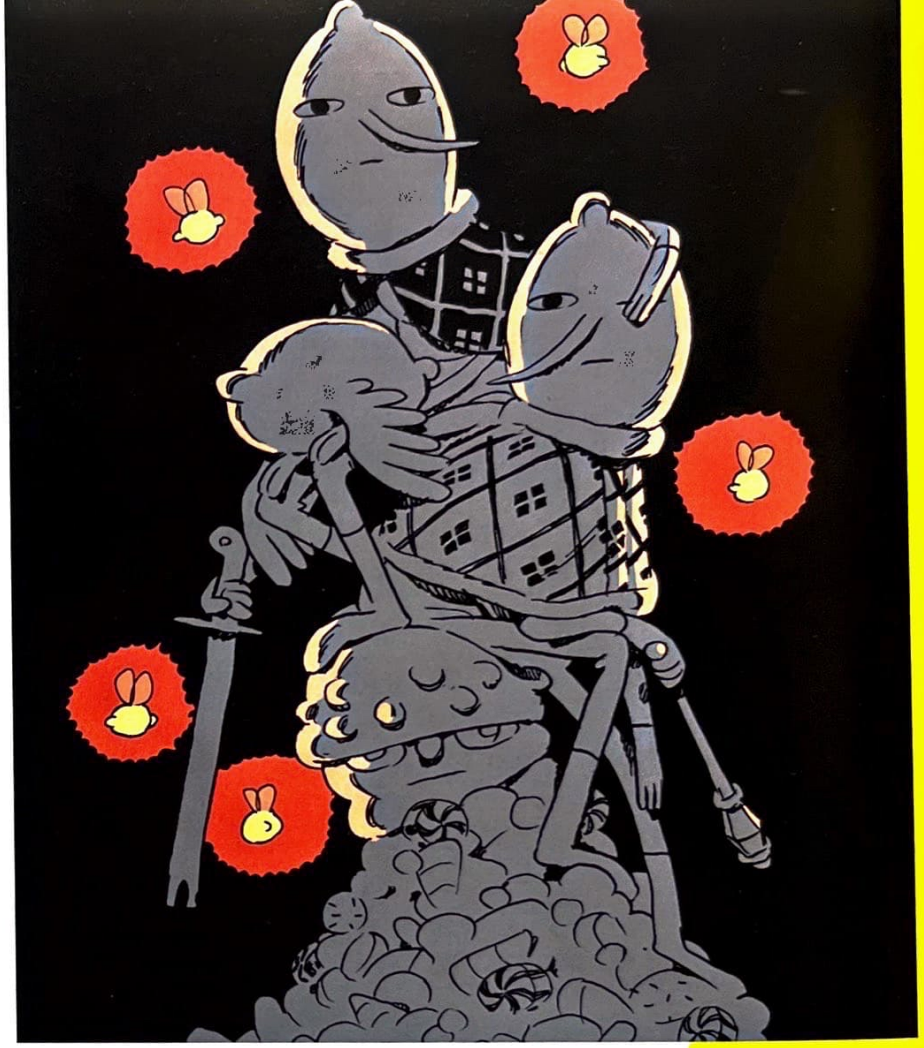
Justin Roiland, voice of Earl of Lemongrab (and Lemongrab 2), on the origins of Lemongrab's signature grating screeching:
I remember Pen asking me if I'd be interested in doing a voice and I enthusiastically said yes. I was thrilled to be a part of the show (I was a fan). While I was lucky that Pen just handed me a voice like that with no audition required, it was also kind of terrifying because I had no idea what to do with the character. I brought my friend Ryan Ridley for moral support and went into the recording session cold. The first thing I tried was basically what the Lemongrab voice is today. I screamed a few lines of dialogue, and Pen smiled and gave me the thumbs-up, and off we went. It was a blast, and I remember surprising myself with how high-pitched and long a scream I was able to muster for that first big line of his.

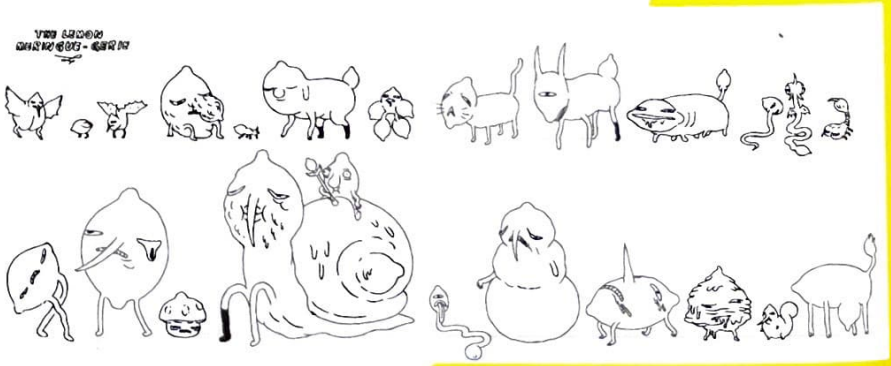
On identifying with any of Lemongrab's quirks, demands, needs, or sadistic dungeon sentencing:
I feel like everyone at one point in their life can relate to the idea of being an outsider. Lemongrab is definitely an outsider in the Land of Ooo. I can also identify with his struggle to express himself the right way. He seems to have trouble making the connection between his thoughts and the words he uses. That happens to me often. Unlike Lemongrab, I am much more rational and calm, I know how to work well with others, and it really takes a lot for me to lose my temper. It rarely ever happens.

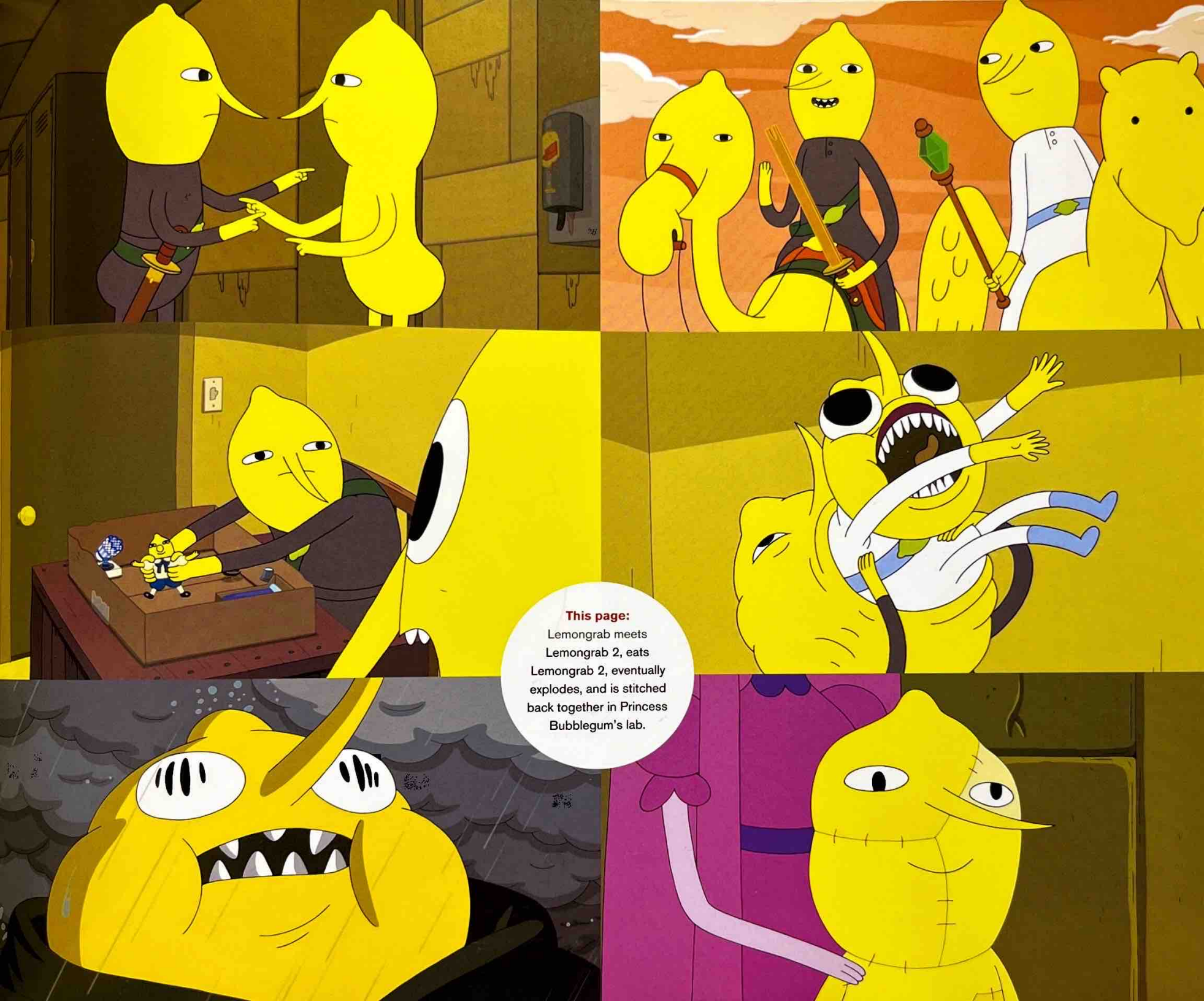
On drawing from experience with people who have extreme personalities:
I have found that my personality tends to balance well with extreme personalities. I'm really easygoing, patient, and forgiving. Not to pat myself on the back or anything. But I'm great. I'm just so fun to be around. I might start selling tickets to hang around me for a day. Just kidding–I'm not that great really.

Right above: An unofficial promotional piece by Thomas Herpich for the episode "All Your Fault." This episode was co-storyboarded by Steve Wolfhard.

Right below: "The Lemon Meringue-gerie" assortment of lemon mutant designs by Steve Wolfhard.

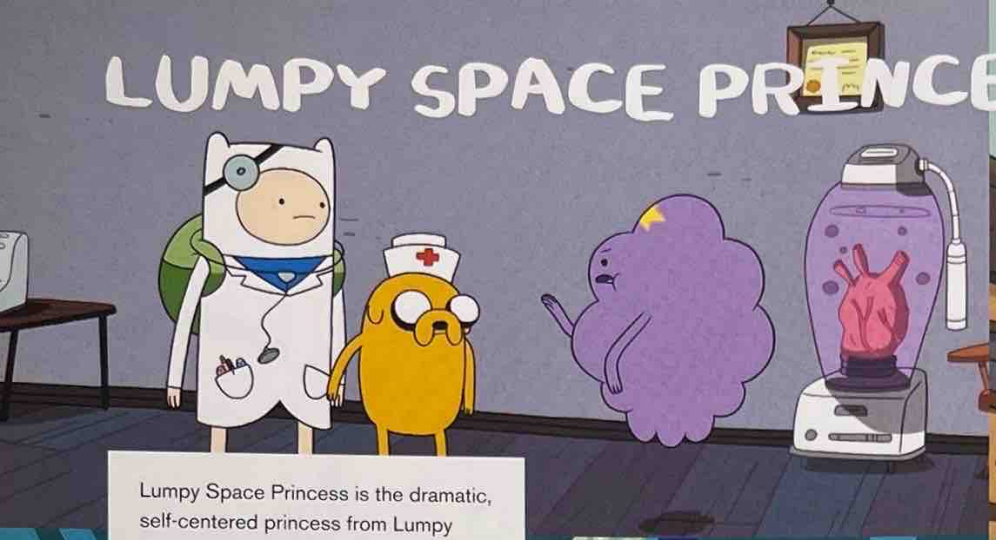






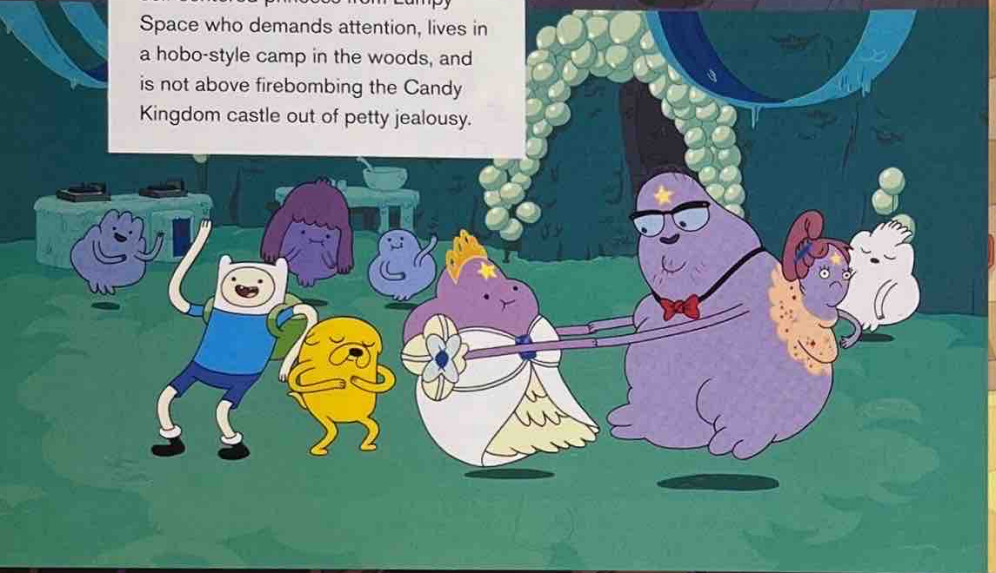
This page: Lemongrab meets Lemongrab 2, eats Lemongrab 2, eventually explodes, and is stitched back together in Princess Bubblegum's lab.

LUMPY SPACE PRINCESS



Lumpy Space Princess is the dramatic, self-centered princess from Lumpy Space who demands attention, lives in a hobo-style camp in the woods, and is not above firebombing the Candy Kingdom castle out of petty jealousy.











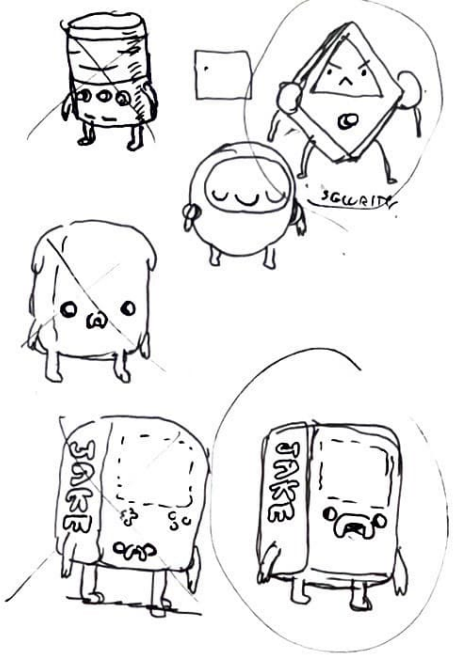


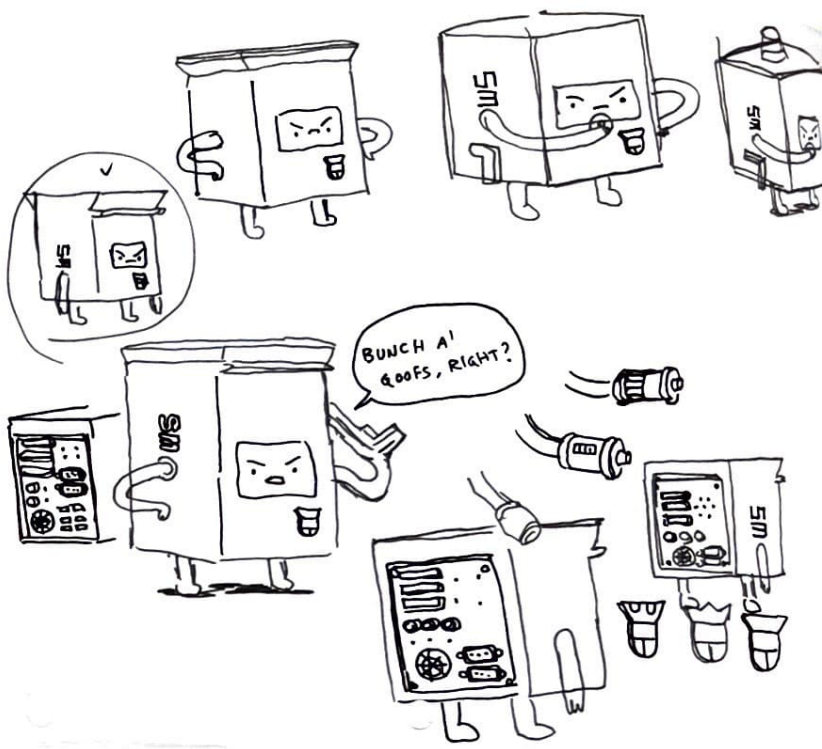
This spread: LSP's main concerns are herself, gossiping, and how hot she looks with her lumpin' lumps.

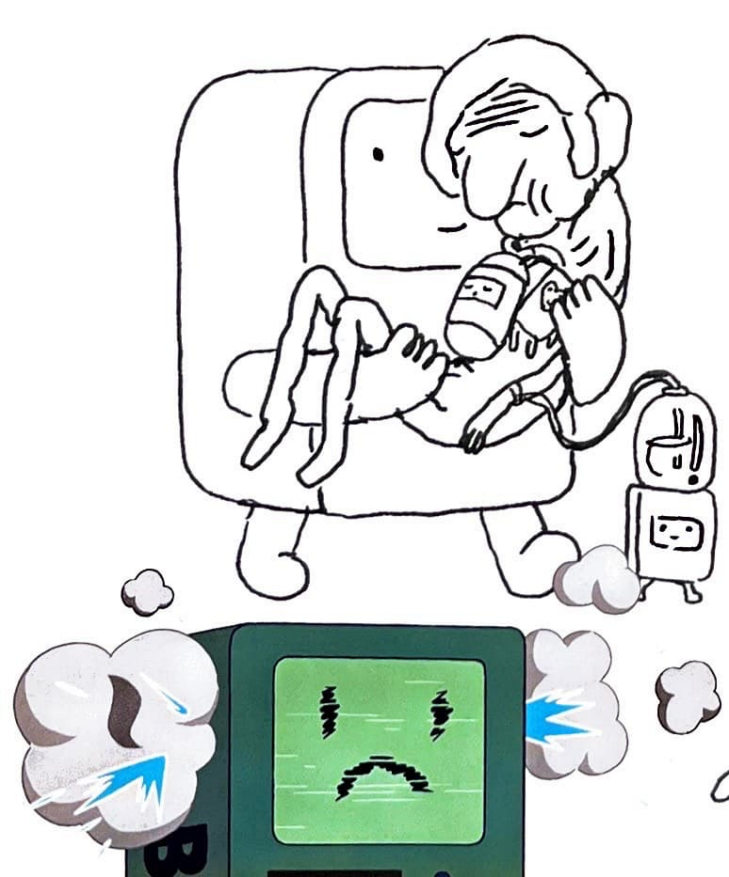
BMO

IT WAS LIKE THIS WHEN I GOT HERE.

BMO is the sentient, genderfluid video game console/robot that lives with Finn and Jake in their tree house. BMO is childlike, friendly, helpful, naïve, and imaginative–but also has a private side that is kept secret from Finn and Jake.





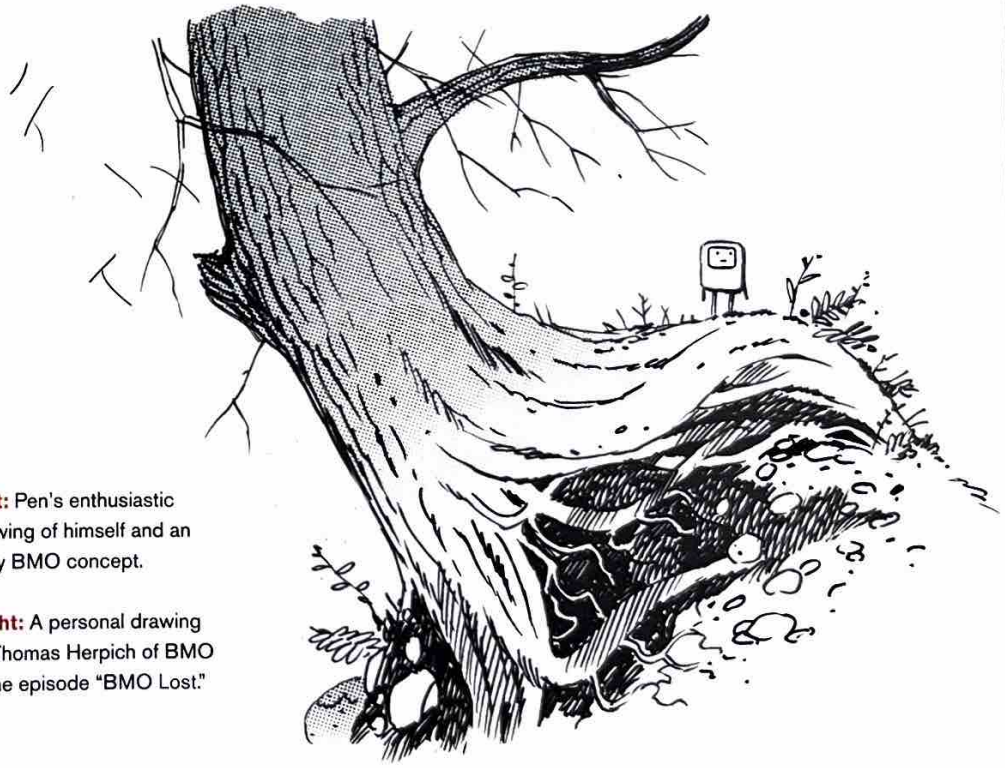




This page and opposite top: Studies of Moe, the inventor of BMO and all of the MO robots, by Steve Wolfhard. Moe's skin is human, but his organs have been replaced with robot parts. From the episode "Be More."



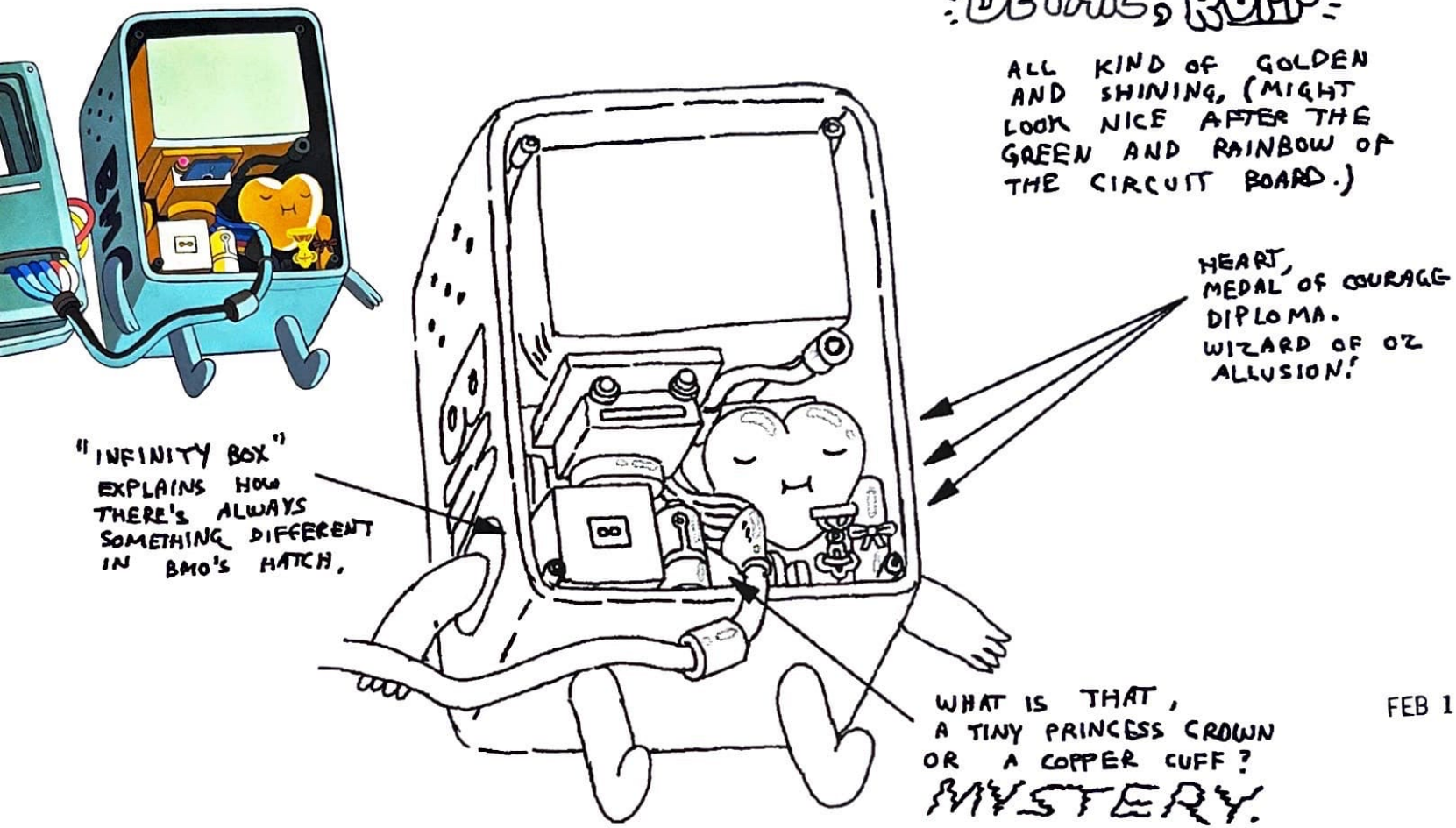




Left: Pen's enthusiastic drawing of himself and an early BMO concept.

Right: A personal drawing by Thomas Herpich of BMO in the episode "BMO Lost."

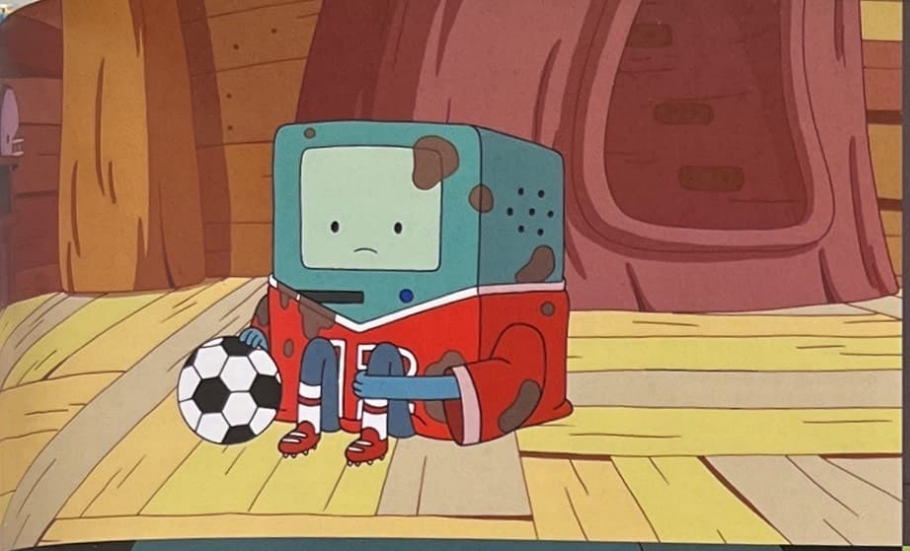
Voicing BMO & Lady Rainicorn:
NIKI YANG



Niki Yang, voice of BMO and Lady Rainicorn, on creating BMO's voice:
I am no professional actor. In the audition, I just read lines as best I could. I think somehow my "no-acting" reading created naïveness and the childlike tone of BMO. And that became my trademark. BMO is suspiciously innocent. Simple yet secretive. I believe that layers are what this character's charm is.

On why Jake and Lady are a good couple, on whether Lady's lines are funny (in Korean) and how they are written, and on what is enjoyable about performing Lady's lines:
I think they are a perfect comical couple! We don't know how, but they perfectly understand each other. You know, language doesn't matter in love business! Lady's lines are very funny. You can easily find what she said on fan websites. They are written by the storyboard artists and are delivered to me in English. Then I translate them to Korean. I love doing Lady because it's all about intonation to the audience.

Above: A page from Steve Wolfhard's half of the storyboard from the episode "Be More," featuring reference for BMO's internal components and the associated color model (inset left).

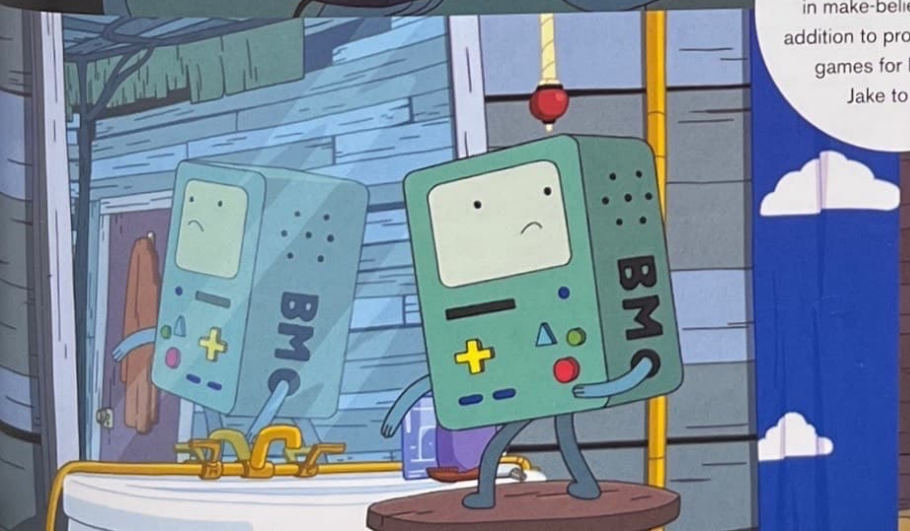


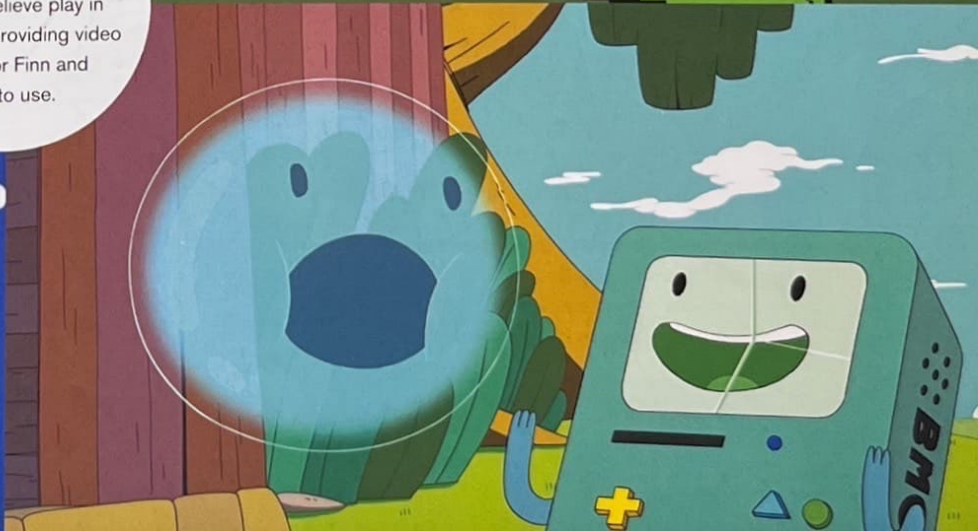






This page:
BMO often spends time alone engrossed in make-believe play in addition to providing video games for Finn and Jake to use.

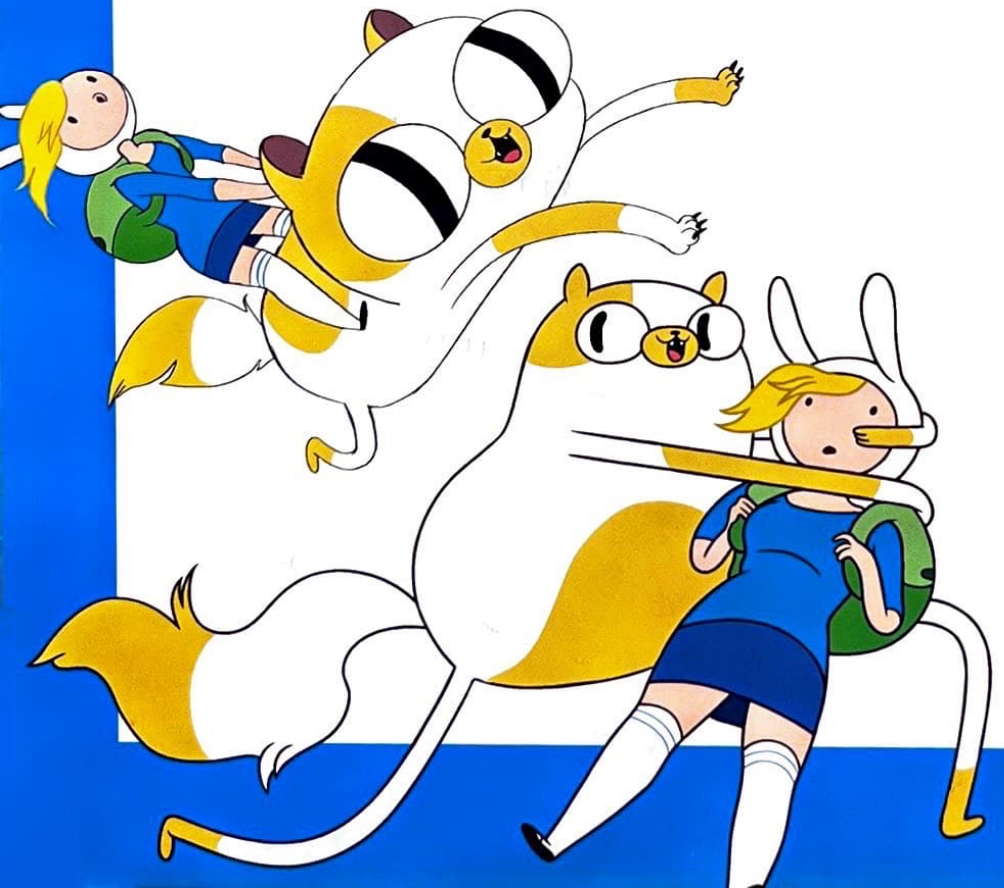




FIONNA AND CAKE

Fionna and Cake originated as personal fan art–style drawings and comics by storyboard revisionist and designer Natasha Allegri, which she posted on her blog. Pen saw the gender-swapped versions of Finn and Jake, liked the concept, and the writer's room began developing an episode featuring the characters. The episode "Adventure Time with Fionna and Cake" premiered during season three, and was storyboarded by Rebecca Sugar and Adam Muto. The device that was eventually added to explain the alternate-universe gender swap was that the entire story was being told by Ice King to a captive Finn and Jake: Ice King is the author of a large amount of "fan fiction" about Finn and Jake as female versions of themselves. Which is just one of the creepy things about Ice King.

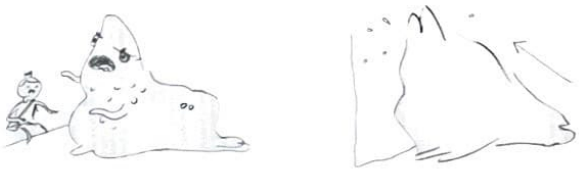
Below: Special-pose models of Fionna and Cake.



ADVENTURE TIME – SEASON 3
"ADVENTURE TIME WITH FIONA & CAKE" outline

ACT ONE

1. Prince Perfect (age 15) and his royal troops are defending Perfect Kingdom from a sludgebeast attack. (The magical sludgebeast has separated into many pieces and is attacking the kingdom from every corner) But Prince Perfect is a fearless leader and he leads his troops like a [redacted] champ! (It is an exciting battle with lots of fighting) Eventually the sludgebeast gets the upper hand, re-forms, and corners the prince against a wall and smothers him. The troops don't know what to do.



Suddenly, Fiona and Cake burst onto the scene! Fiona and Cake? Yes! Fiona and Cake! Land of Aaa's most awesome human girl/magical female cat combo! Fiona slices at the sludgebeast with her sword and it retreats into the cracks of the wall, leaving the prince, shaken but unharmed! Hooray!



2. Prince Perfect – "You were a great help in defeating this beast." He takes Fiona's hand and bows like a gentleman. Cake whistles and Fiona blushes. PP – "Please allow me to thank you properly over dinner tonight at a fancy restaurant of my choosing." Before Fiona can answer, the prince excuses himself to check on his troops.

3. Cake teases Fiona about her "big date". Fiona scowls – "That guy's not so perfect. "We were a *great help*"? Who's he kidding, we saved his royal [redacted] Cake laughs – "I think you like him!" F – "You know what? I will go on the date just to expose his flaws. I will prove to you that his name shouldn't be 'Prince Perfect", but 'Prince *Poser*.'"

ACT TWO

4. PP takes Fiona to a fancy pants, titanic-style, ballroom/restaurant located at the bottom of a lake. (You have to get there by jumping into a giant pneumatic tube) It is very fancy and wonderful. Cake (who's hiding in Fiona's pocket) whistles at the fanciness of it all. Fiona – "Shh!" The maitre D greets them and informs the prince that their table is ready.

5. At their table, PP absent-mindedly folds his dinner napkin into an elaborate origami sword. F – "Whoa, that's like my favorite weapon." PP – "Mine too." Fiona smiles, but quickly remembers her mission. She asks the prince questions, trying to get him to reveal that he's full of himself, but he doesn't. PP – "I owe you an apology for earlier. Saying 'you were a great help' when the fact of the matter is that you saved my royal [redacted]' Fiona arches an eyebrow. PP – "Unfortunately, I have to act like that in front of my battallion, otherwise….I'm sorry, you don't want to hear about this." F – "Are you kidding? I love talking about war!"

6. Cut to, Prince Lollipop & Marshal Lee (PB and Marceline) having dinner a few tables away. They witness Fiona having fun on her date and they don't like it. Lollipop – "Because that guy's not perfect, not because I like Fiona." Marshall Lee – "Right, it's because he's a[redacted]." (note: They're both jealous in an Archie Comics way) Marshall Lee gets an idea, calls the waiter over and whispers in his ear.

7. Back to Fiona where the prince continues to charm the [redacted] out of her. When Fiona is bothered by a fly, PP snatches it in his hand and tosses it in his mouth. F – "Cool!" PP – "That's nothing, watch me rehabilitate him with my psychic powers." PP sticks out his tongue and the fly is standing there like a paroled prisoner. Fly – "I apologize for bothering you, brave warrior. Now if you'll excuse me…" The fly rises into the air like Jesus Christ and disappears. F – "Whoa!"

8. Just then the waiter (who Marshall Lee whispered to) walks by and clumsily spills tomato juice all over PP who screams – "MY FAVORITE JACKET!"All eyes are on the prince. Is he going to freak out? Is this it? Will he finally prove that he's not perfect? The prince collects himself and chuckles – "How can I be upset, when the reason I'm wearing my favorite jacket is right here. (He points at Fiona.) The most awesome warrior in all of Aaa!" The entire restaurant applauds PP's perfect demeanor. Fiona is beaming.

9. PP asks Fiona for second date where he will show her "something wonderful." Before Fiona can answer, PP excuses himself to take a leak.

10. Lollipop and Marshall Lee run up and try to talk F out of going on the second date. They don't like PP. He's a phony! But Fiona has been completely won over by PP's charms and announces that she will indeed go on a second date! Cake – "Yay!" Lolliipop and Marshall Lee do not like this at all.

ACT THREE

11. Fiona, arrives at Perfect Castle where Prince Perfect greets her with royal fanfare. (note: at one point Fiona puts her sword on the ground to applaud, and forgets about it) Cut to: Lollipop and Marshall Lee hiding in the bushes. They want to sabotage the date.

12. Cut to: inside. The date is going great until PP steps outside alone to get some air. Lollipop and Marshall Lee jump PP and tell him to back off Fiona. PP laughs and says they're just jealous. He gives Marshall Lee a shove and ML slaps PP in the face, which causes it to momentarily transform into the sludgebeast's face, and then quickly back into the prince. Lollipop – "What the [redacted]was that?" PP stares at them – "I'm warning you both to leave."

13. Back to Fiona inside. PP bursts in followed by Lollipop and Marshall Lee who try to warn Fiona that PP isn't what he seems. PP has them escorted off the premises by the royal guard and is now alone with Fiona. He asks if she's ready to see something wonderful and Fiona says yes. PP holds her hands. F – "Well?" PP – "Look at my hands." She does and they turn into sludge. F – "Y'ah! What the -?" PP laughs and transforms into the sludgebeast. Sludgebeast – "I'm the sludgebeast!" F – "Oh man! I *knew* it!" Sludgebeast – "Yes, you were the only one who knew something was wrong! You said I wasn't perfect, and now I must kill you!" Fiona battles the sludgebeast. It's an awesome fight that takes them all over the castle and eventually outside where Fiona has left her sword. She uses it to defeat the sludgebeast. Victory!

14. Fiona is now standing near the wall where the real PP has been held captive since being smothered by the beast. Fiona uses her sword to release PP and he really is perfect. He asks Fiona out, but she turns him down because she's jaded after the first PP turned out to be a sludgebeast. But she does allow him to give her and Cake a ride home. END



Opposite right and this page: The original Fionna and Cake episode outline by Pen and Natasha Allegri, in which Fionna is spelled with one *n*, and Prince Gumball is originally called Prince Lollipop.

FIONNA AND CAKE

This spread: Revised from the outline on the previous spread, this outline of the episode "Adventure Time with Fionna and Cake" includes storyboard artist Rebecca Sugar's extensive notes and drawings used to work out ideas for the story. The outline leaves a lot of room for storyboard artists to fill in story details, and a lot of running time to fill with specifics. The episode was co-boarded by Adam Muto. Below on the left is Rebecca Sugar's rough for a personal promotional drawing, complete with gender-swapped storyboard artists "Madam Muto" and "Roberto Sugar."

Right: Design model of Prince Gumball (with sparkly eyes), the gender-swapped version of Princess Bubblegum.





OPENING

alternate opening for "Adventure Time with Fionna and Cake"

ACT 1

1) Prince Gumball and Fiona & Cake are hanging out (doing scientific tests on the soil? or.. something..) Prince Gumball is acting flirty in a joking way - setting up that he messes with Fiona in that way.

2) Ice Queen suddenly shows up (with her "gunter" equivalent?) and attempts to kidnap Prince Gumball. Fiona defeats her.

3) Prince Gumball is SO thankful. He tells Fiona that he never realized it before... but... he likes her... a lot. And he'd like to GO STEADY WITH HER (or the equivalent of that). Fiona thinks he's messing with her again, but before she can refuse Cake accepts!

4) At the treehouse Fiona is nervous and uncomfortable about going on the date. She's afraid she'll be made a fool of, because PG is obviously just joking around. Cake: "But what if he really IS totally into you?" Fiona has trouble believing that could be true.

FIONA DECIDES TO GO ON THE DATE TO PROVE THAT PRINCE GUMBALL DOESN'T REALLY LIKE HER, IN THAT WAY (but... also... she really does want to go on the date...)

- F & GB MEET. GB THROWING BALL. ALL BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE WILL BE THERE HOOKIN UP AND GB WANTS FIONA TO BE A SPECIAL GUEST → HEAD OF SECURITY! HIS PERSONAL BODYGUARD!
(F IS ANNOYED SHE'S GOT NOTHING BUT GUY FRIENDS NO BOYFRIEND)
ICE QUEEN ISN'T INVITED! SHE'S EVIL (IQ OVERHEARS & IN STORM OF TERRIBLE MAGIC DECIDES ON FREE!)
F FIGHTS IQ, CONFUSING MAZE, GB IS ,, OR?
GB SUDDENLY AFFECTIONATE?? ARMS OUT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TONIGHT?
F BAFFLED. CAKE SAYS GO FOR IT!
- WONDERFUL FIGHT DATE
- COME WITH ME TO THE BALL AS MY DATE! WE'LL LET EVERYONE KNOW WE'RE TOGETHER!
F TELL CAKE, CAKE SHOCKED - TOO FAST!

ACT 2

5) Fiona goes on the date with Prince Gumball, with Cake watching from the sidelines throughout the day.

6) Fiona tests prince gumball in various ways during the date, and all the tests prove that PG still likes her.

SOME STUFF TO DO DURING THE DATE:

They ride Lord Monochromicorn.

~~Marshall Lee cameo somewhere.~~

LSP cameo?

7) Over the course of the second act, Fiona realizes more and more that it's true.... The prince really does like her!

8) At the end of the date, Prince Gumball invites Fiona to his castle to have an evening alone.... he'll ask all the servants to leave so they can spend some time together... alone. She accepts!

9) Cake thinks that maybe things are moving too fast. but Fiona is too super excited to give Cake's warning any credence.

ACT 3

10) Prince Gumball and Fiona have a dinner alone. The mood gets creepier and creepier.

11) Prince Gumball use's Fiona's trust in him to trap her somehow (how?! ? somehow Fiona gives up her sword? or puts on a cursed "going steady" ring? spell? or something?). Prince Gumball reveals himself to be the Ice Queen! It was all a trap! If she gets rid of Fiona once and for all, she'll be free to marry Prince Gumball (who is nearby, tied up or something).

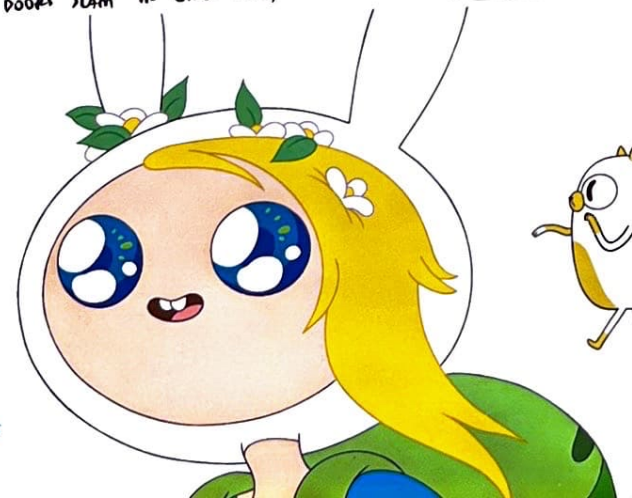
11 1/2) i guess maybe the Ice Queen should excuse herself from the room at this point, or something? in order for beat 12 to work. or... i dunno....

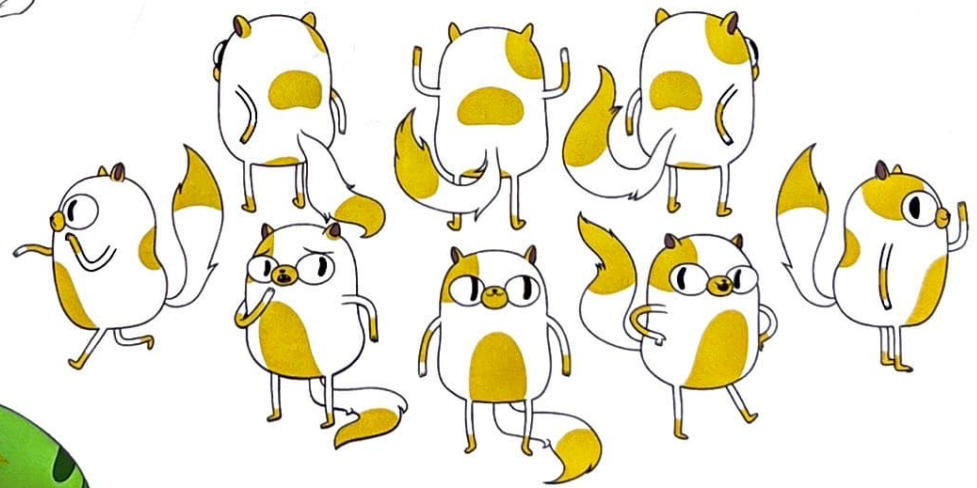
12) Suddenly Cake bursts in and sees Prince Gumball standing next to a beat up & vulnerable Fiona. She's super [redacted] and attacks Prince Gumball.

13) The Ice Queen's attention is momentarily diverted, giving Fiona the opportunity to escape whatever spell or trap she's stuck in. She beats up the Ice Queen and saves the day.

14) Fiona in love with Ice King ending

Right: Design models of Fionna and Cake, the gender- and gender/species-swapped versions of Finn and Jake.







This page:
Scenes from "Adventure Time with Fionna and Cake," the season three introduction to the characters.

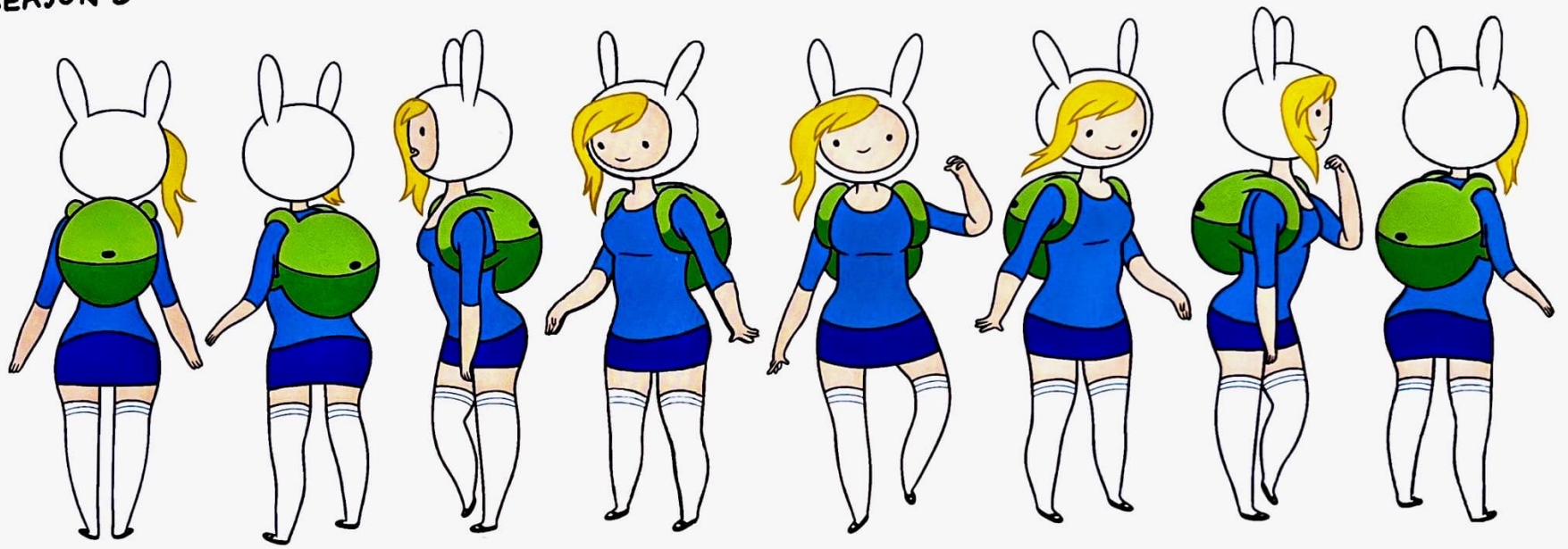


This page:
Scenes from "Bad Little Boy," the season five follow-up featuring Marshall Lee as a magnetic but questionable friend.

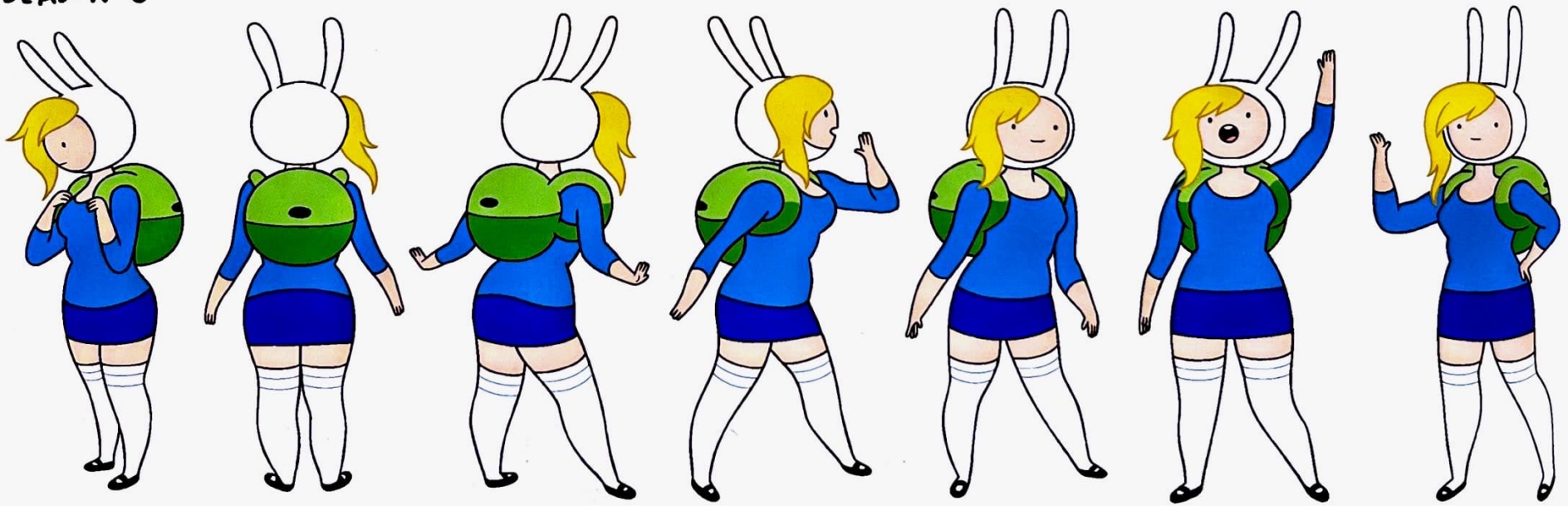
DESIGN EVOLUTION

All animated character designs evolve over years of production as artists find ways to improve upon the originals. Design model line ups are the clearest place to see the differences.

SEASON 3

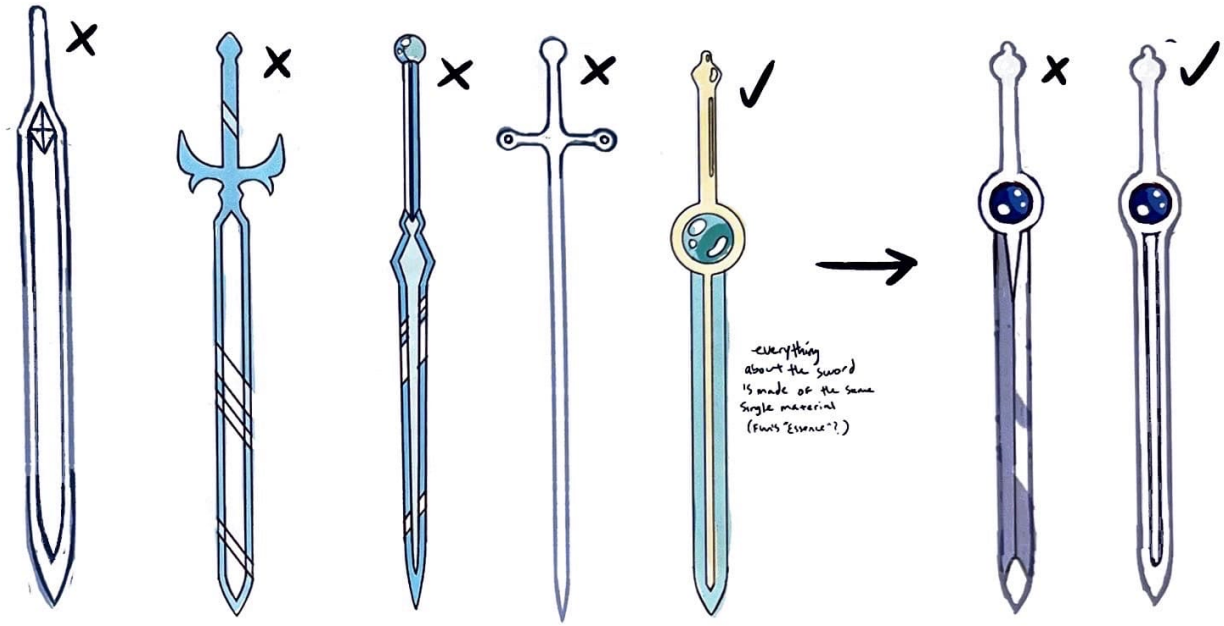


SEASON 6





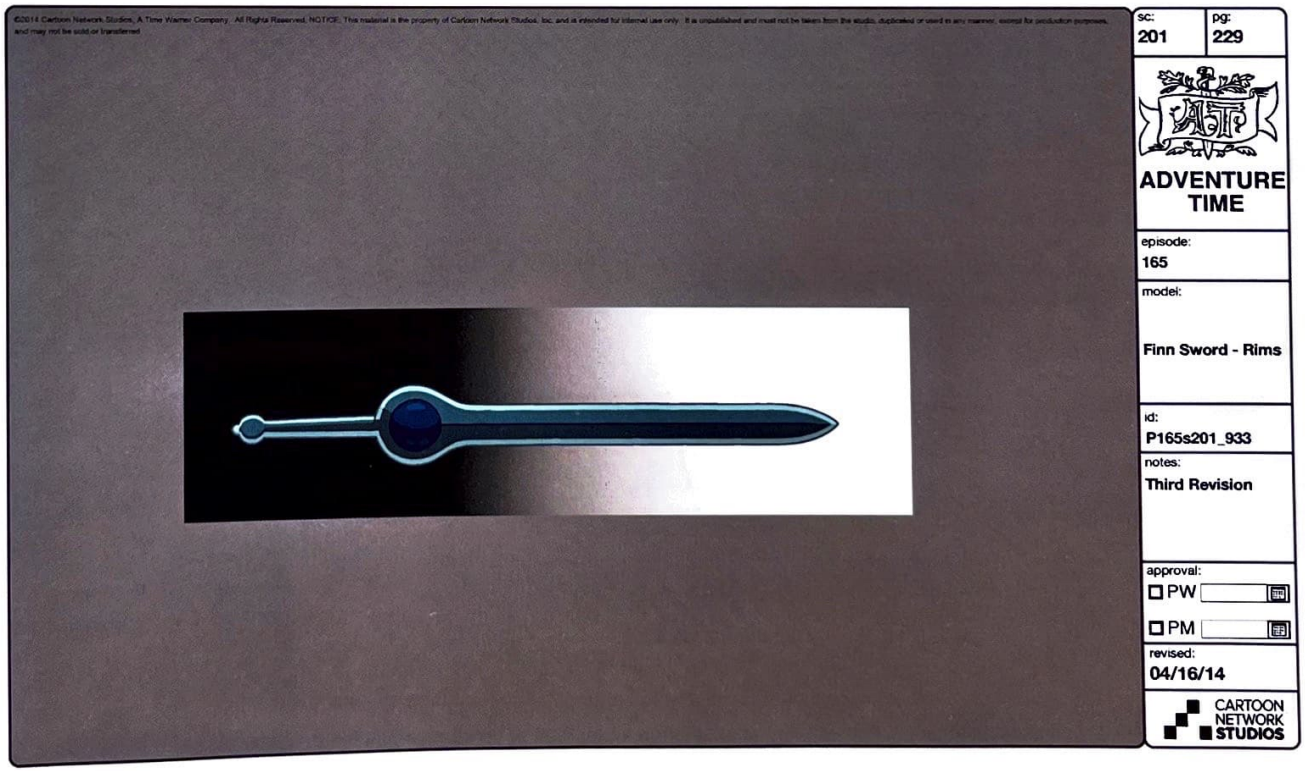
FINN'S DREAM SWORD (SEASON 6)



Opposite: Natasha Allegri has been changing her Fionna design over the years, and to make the show reflect this in season six, Erica Jones updated the design model for Fionna to be used in production (bottom row).

Above: Fionna artwork by Erica Jones.

Right: The continuing evolution of Finn's primary sword. "Jesse asked us to come up with a concept for a dream sword for Finn. The sword is a physical manifestation of Finn in an alternate reality. He wanted something really simple and clean and pure–like Finn in a way. [Initial lead designer] Phil liked to open designs up to all of the designers as a sort of contest to find the best design. We tried that and decided on Erica's sword and tweaked it into the final."
–Matt Forsythe


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MODEL DESIGN TEST

This spread and following three spreads: Along with the "How to Draw *Adventure Time*!" pack (see pages 44–47), the following pages were given to prospective designers to test their skills and understanding of the subtleties required of the job. "Anyway . . . you should start drawing now" is a helpful prompt, as the test is expected to be returned to the producers within a short amount of time, usually around a week.

ADVENTURE TIME SEASON 5
Model Design Test

Here's the Adventure Time Model Design Test. On AT, you will be responsible for designing Characters, Props, and Effects from a finished story board. You will also be asked to contribute design concepts and ideas to help the writing and storyboard process.

We're looking for people that exhibit a strong sense of cartooning fundamentals, structure, rhythm, and appeal. Though we care less about perfect drawings and more about funny drawings that illustrate great ideas. Almost anything goes on Adventure Time. So make sure you have fun with the test.

A note about the Land of Ooo
Ooo is essentially planet Earth in the distant future after nuclear fallout, much like Blade Runner and Mad Max. Years have passed, society has reformed, and magic has come back into the world. All of the people, places and objects in the world should have a story attached to them. We like our models to have a certain sense of specificity and should be interesting visually and conceptually. And funny, funny, funny.

As a general tip, don't try to draw what you think we want to see. Draw what feels good to you, and if it seems too far removed from the look and feel of Adventure Time, give us an alternate. The sensibilities of the show are more similar to independent comics than of traditional cartoons.

Anyway... You should start drawing now.

Go here for tons of reference from what we've already designed.... We totally just handed you a cheat code.

Characters- **http://tinyurl.com/ATs3characters**

Props- **http://tinyurl.com/ATs3props**

Effects- **http://tinyurl.com/ATEffects**

poke around here for even more designs from seasons 1 and 2: **http://tinyurl.com/moreATstuff**

the test shouldn't take more than a few days to draw, but you have a week to complete it.



1.Design A <u>Scavanger that collects garbage.</u>

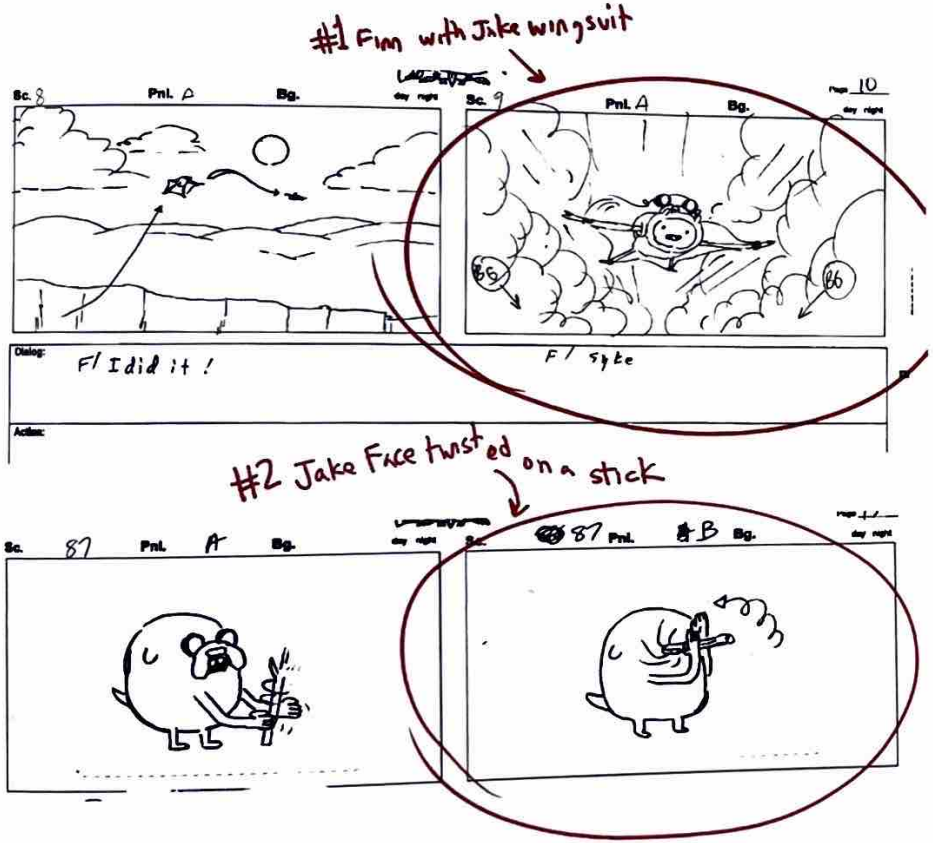
The above drawing is a rough. Feel free to redesign the Scavenger if you'd like. The garbage should be cool and interesting.

part 2: special poses

there are two reasons we do special poses.

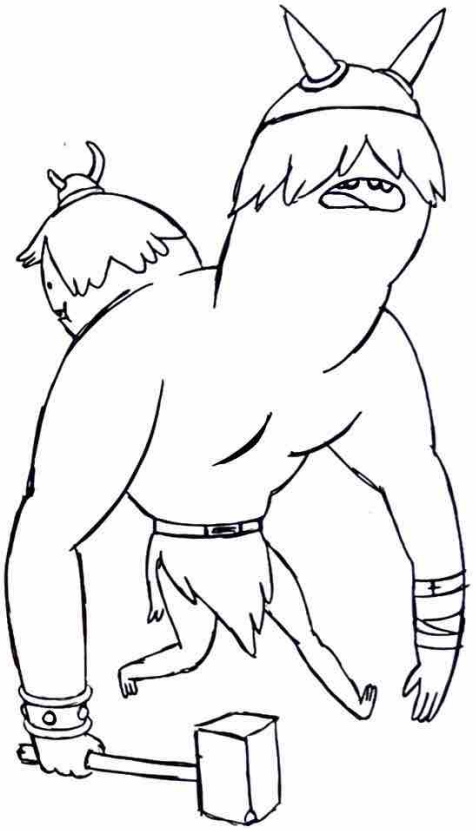
1. in order to clean up and solidify board drawings that are sketchy but have a lot of complexity to them.
2. because we want to make sure funny off-model poses retain their quirky weirdness but work in form and function.

please clean up and complete the following 2 special poses.



you can refer to the AT special poses pdf included with this test for examples of existing special poses.

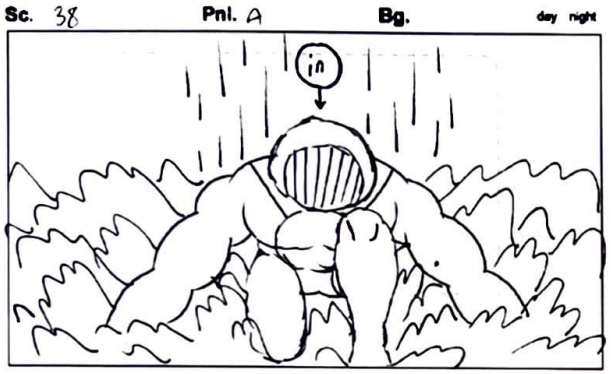
3. Design a **5 point turn** (front, front 3/4, profile, back 3/4, back) of this barbarian based on the sketch below.



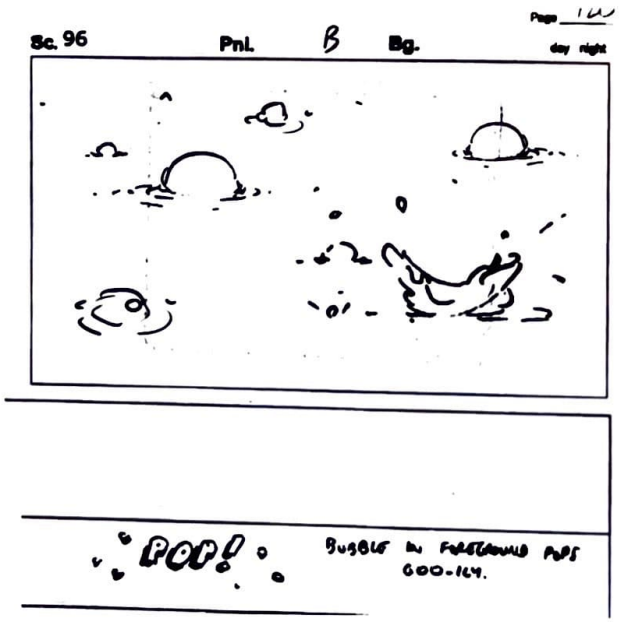
MODEL DESIGN TEST

4: please clean up and tie-down the following **2 effects.**

1. this **water splash efx.**



2. this **bubbling toxic pool.**



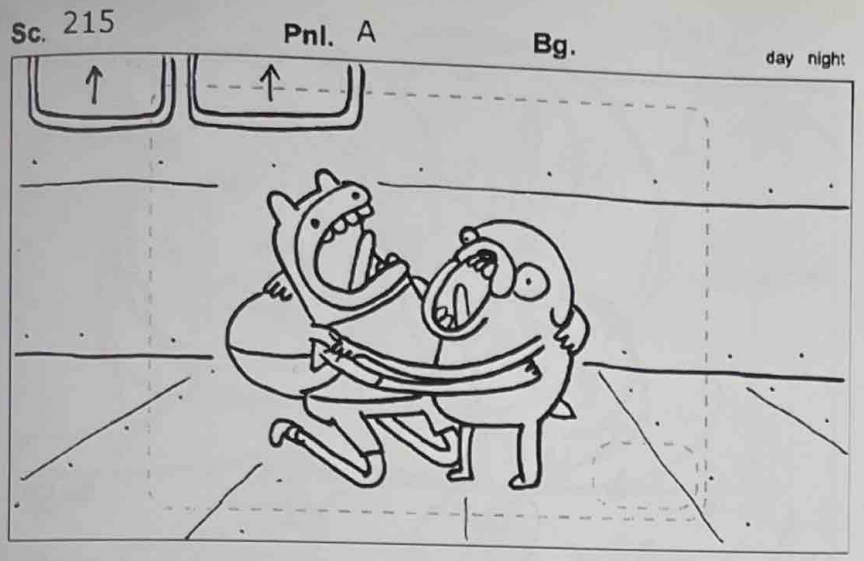
5. draw concepts for the following **3 things:** (these can be sketchy but should be solid drawings)

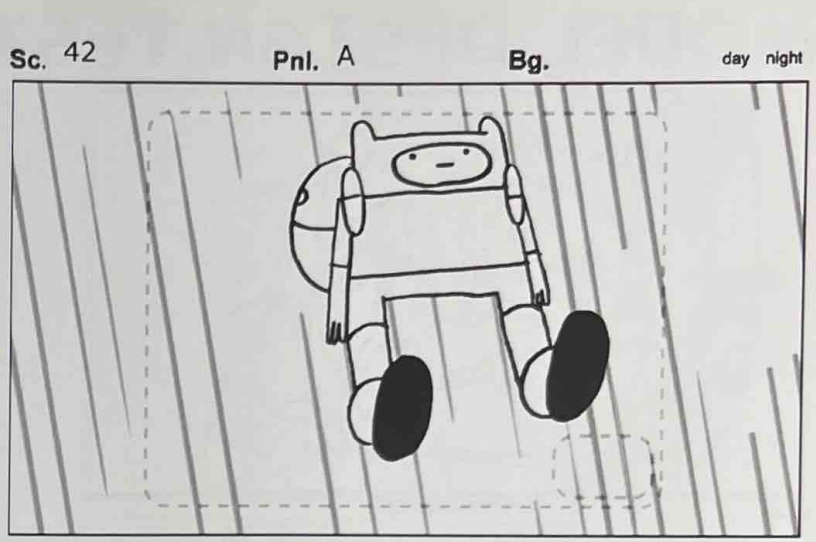
"a wizard"

"a princess"

?

"a monster"

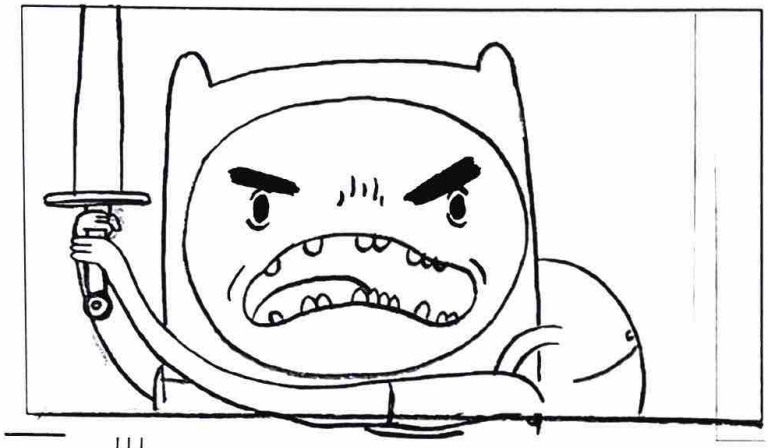


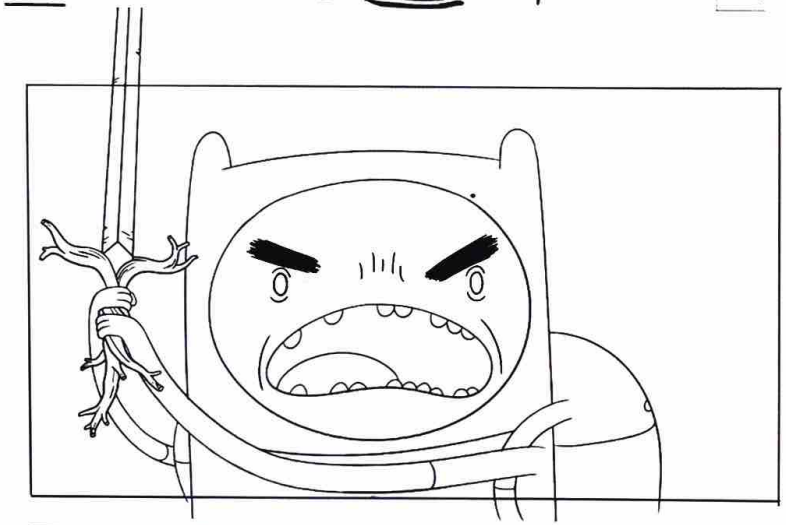


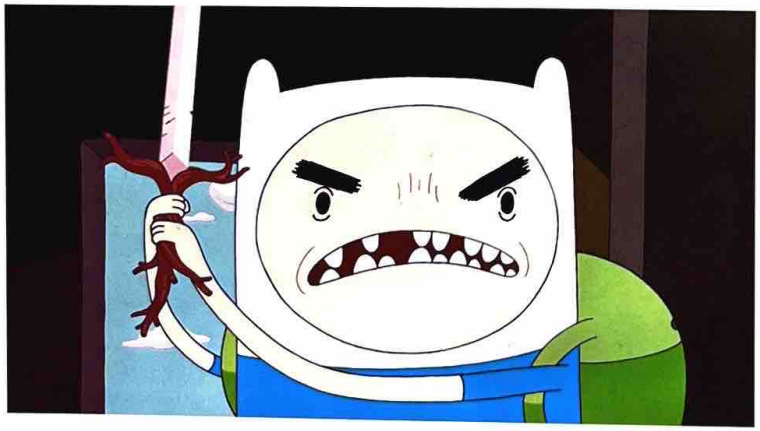


This spread: More pages from the model design test.

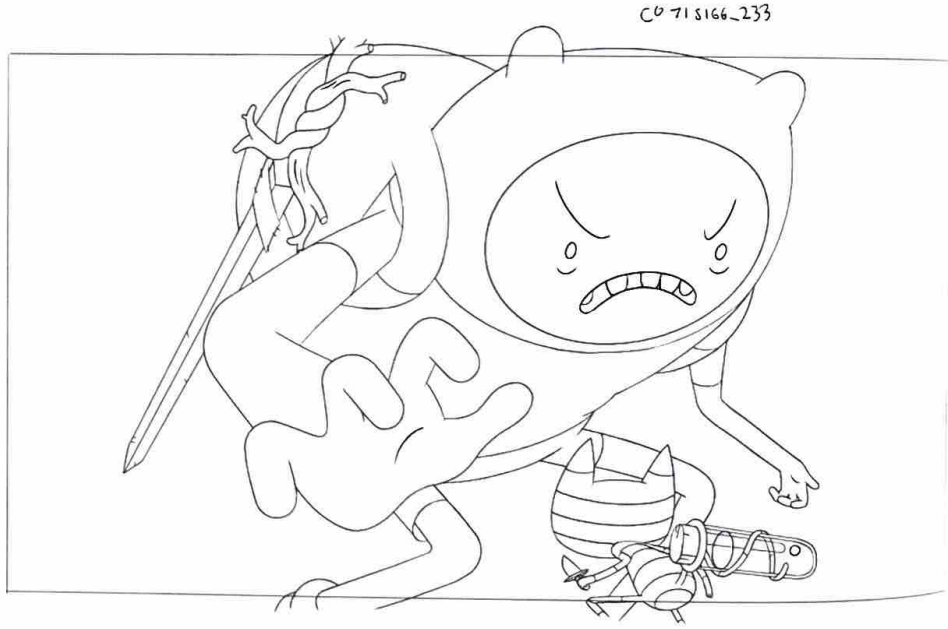
MODEL DESIGN TEST



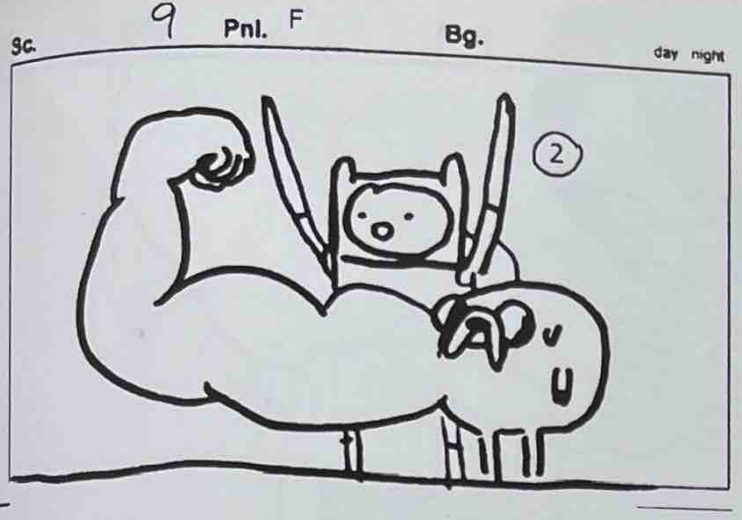


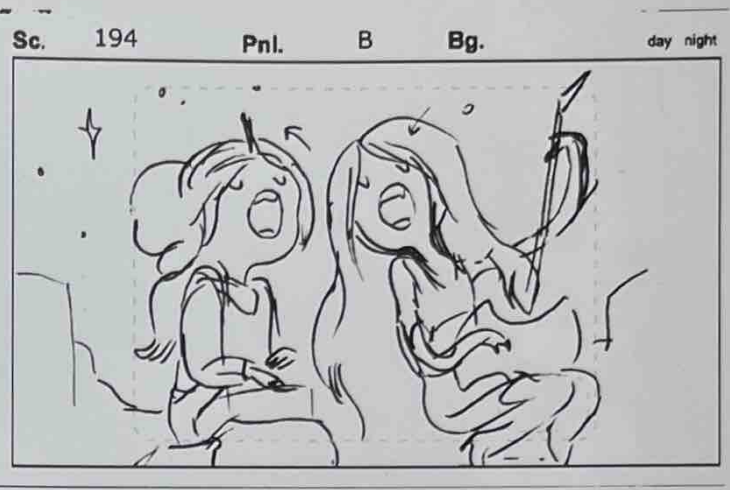


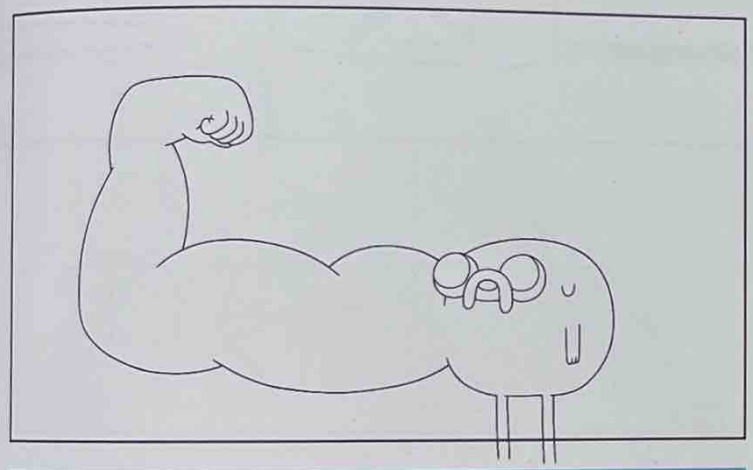


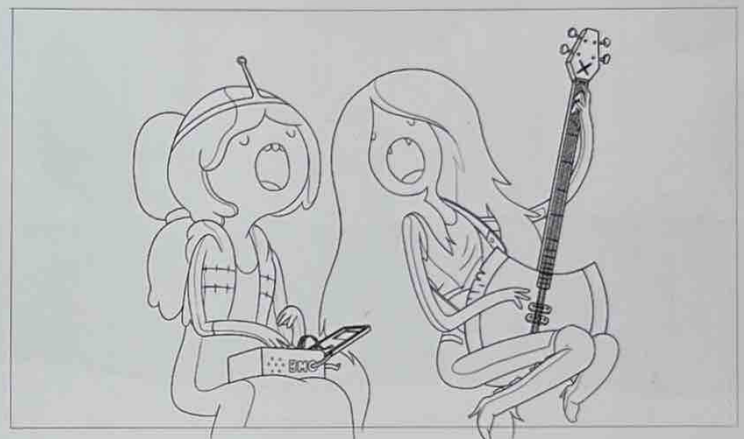


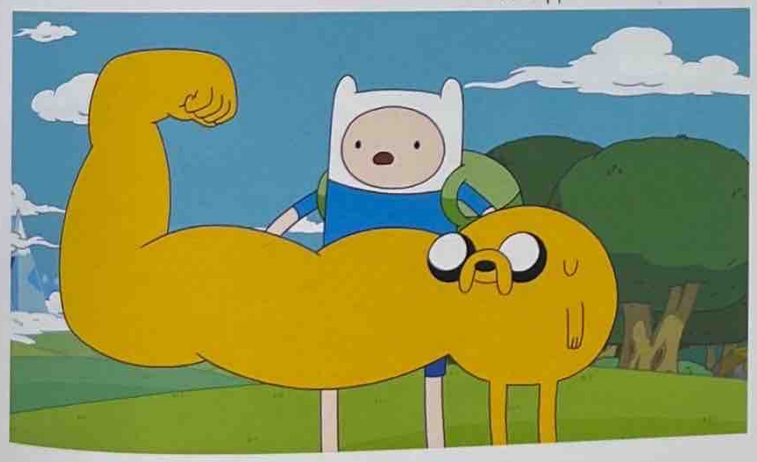
This spread: From the model design test, these black-and-white storyboard panels and cleaned-up special-pose models illustrate the expectations of the job for the prospective designer. Not part of the test, the color images depict the exact or almost exact moments from the final episodes as seen on TV.


Sc. 9 Pnl. F Bg. day night
2


Sc. 194 Pnl. B Bg. day night

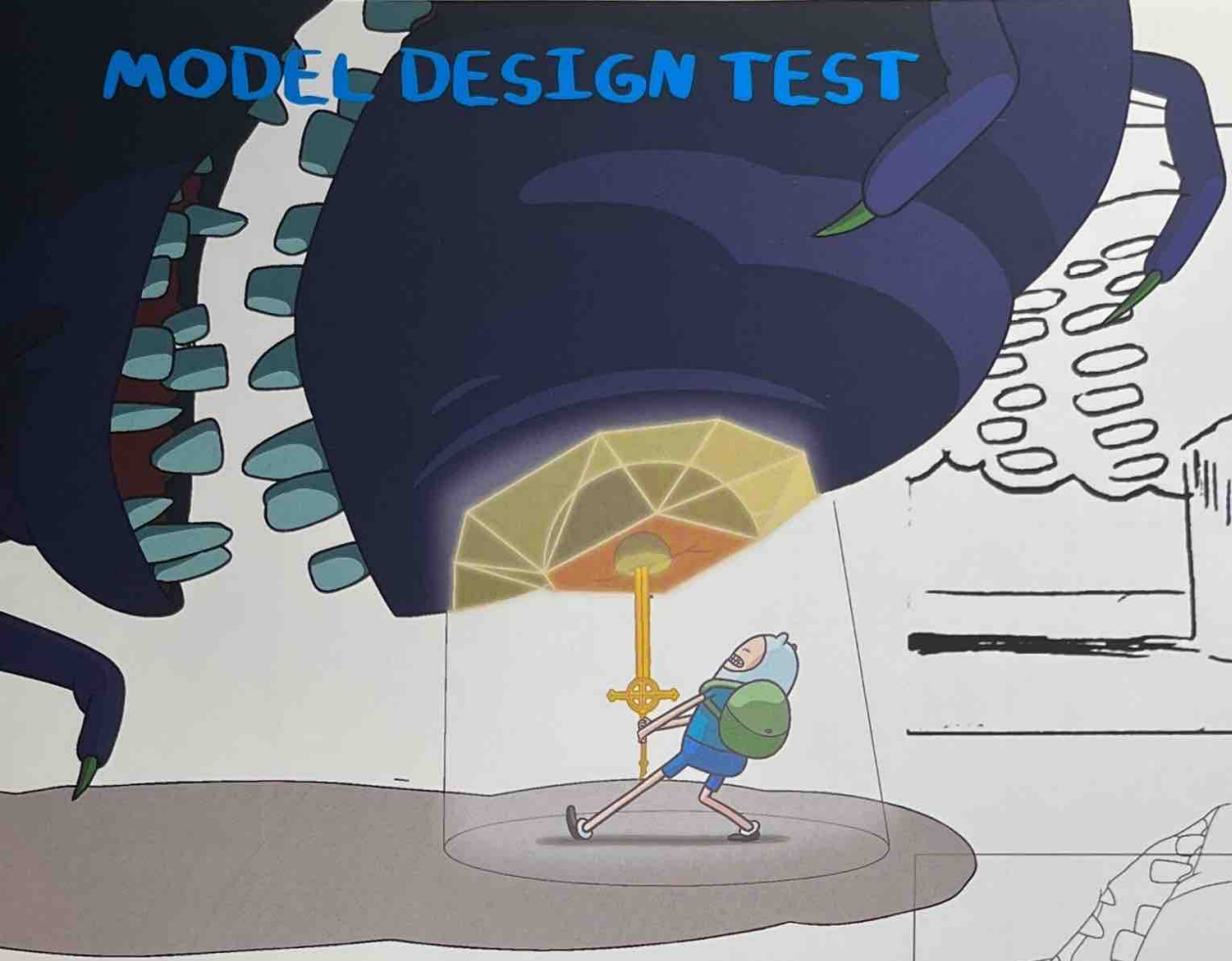


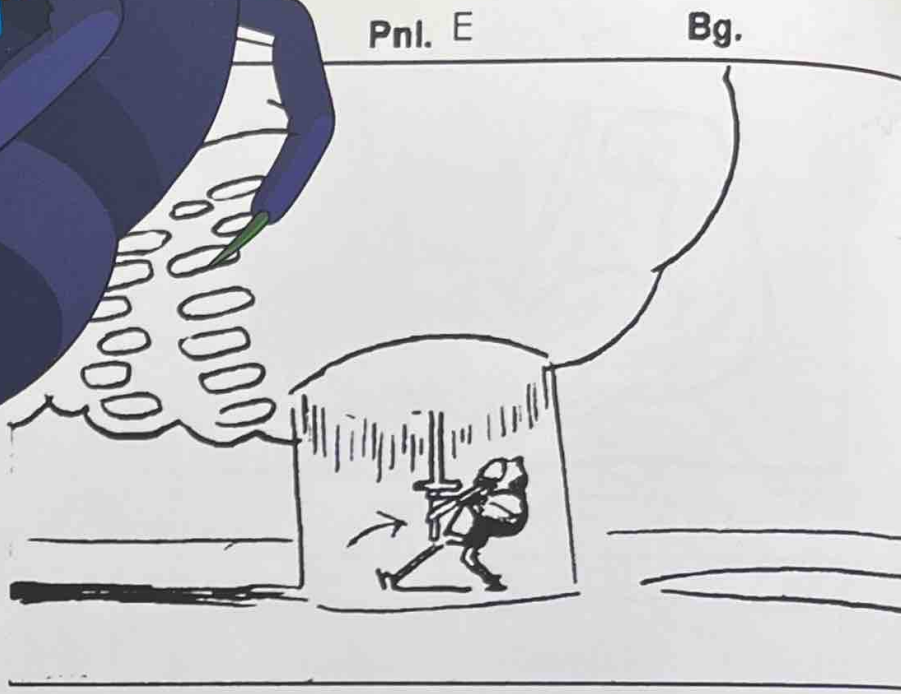




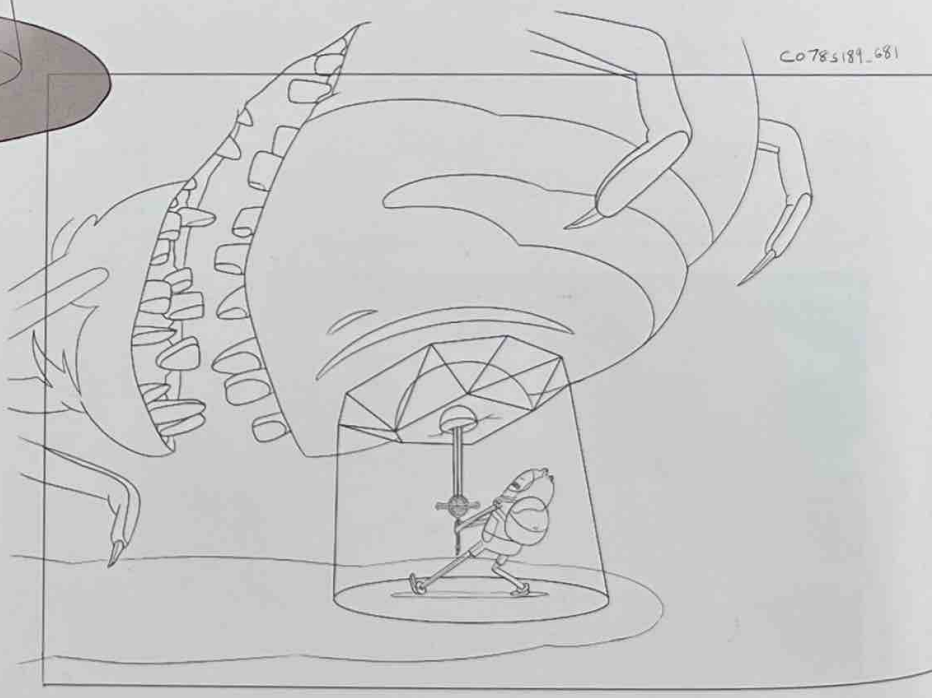


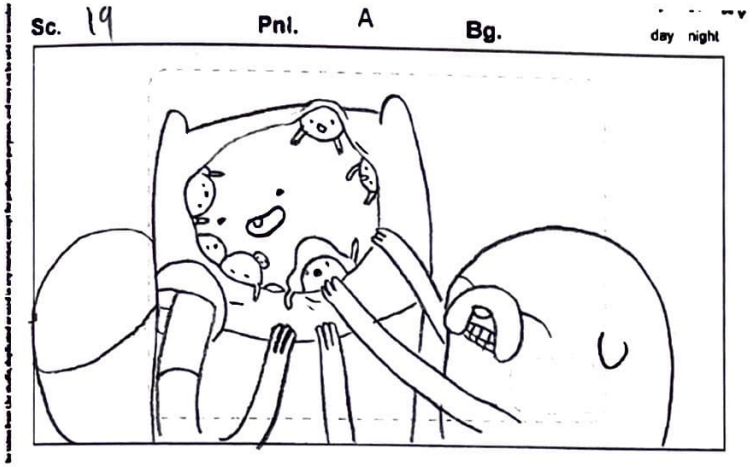
MODEL DESIGN TEST

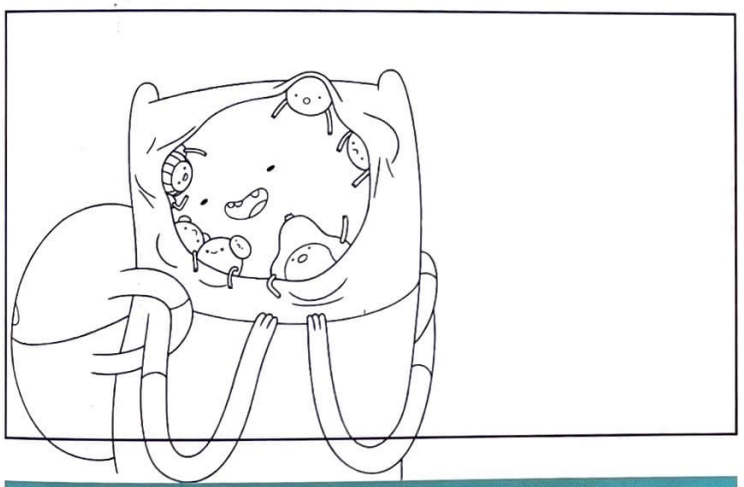


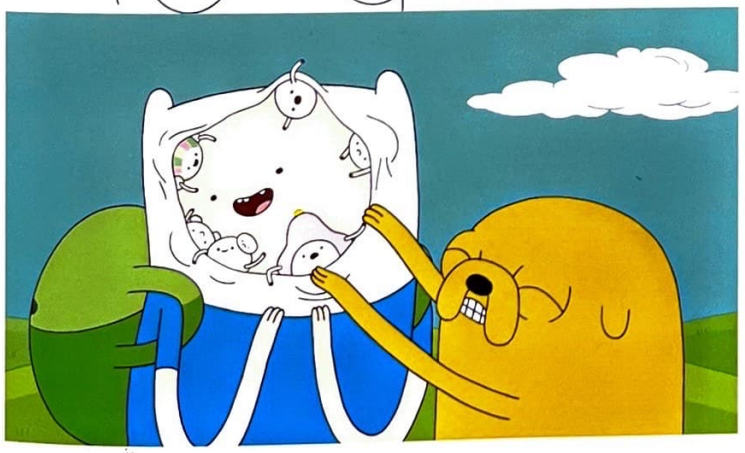




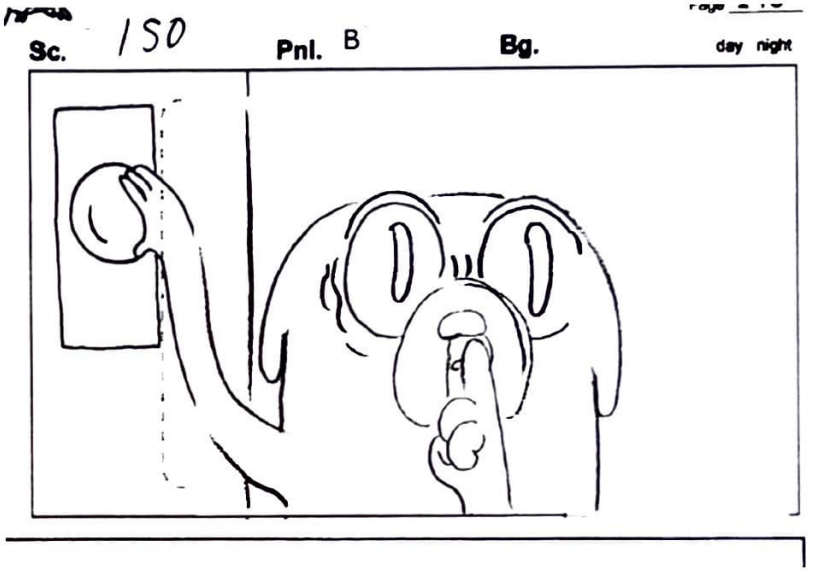


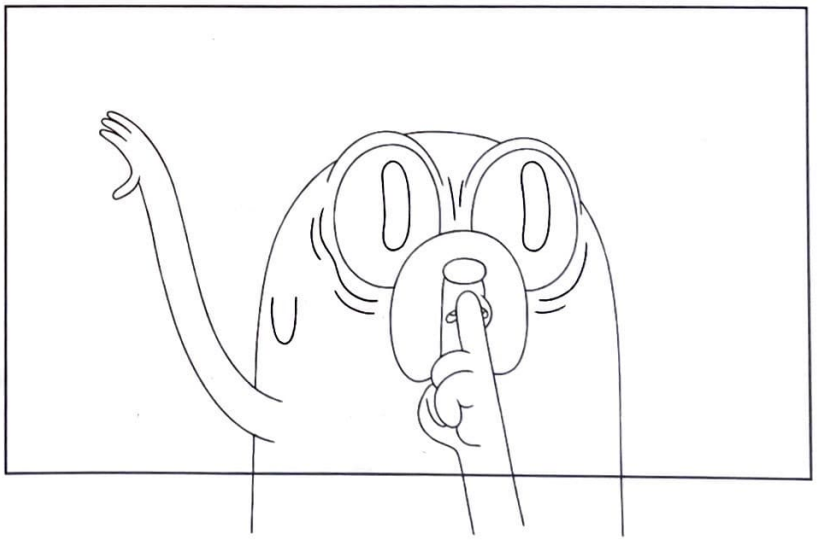






This spread: More examples from the model design test that show a prospective designer how each storyboard panel was interpreted into special-pose designs that were then sent to the animation production studios in South Korea. Not every storyboard panel is redrawn by a designer at Cartoon Network Studios in this way. Only special poses from the storyboard are selected and given this treatment to communicate specific direction, and the animation production crews at Saerom and Rough Draft in South Korea are responsible for interpreting the majority of the storyboard panels directly into fully realized cartoon animation.





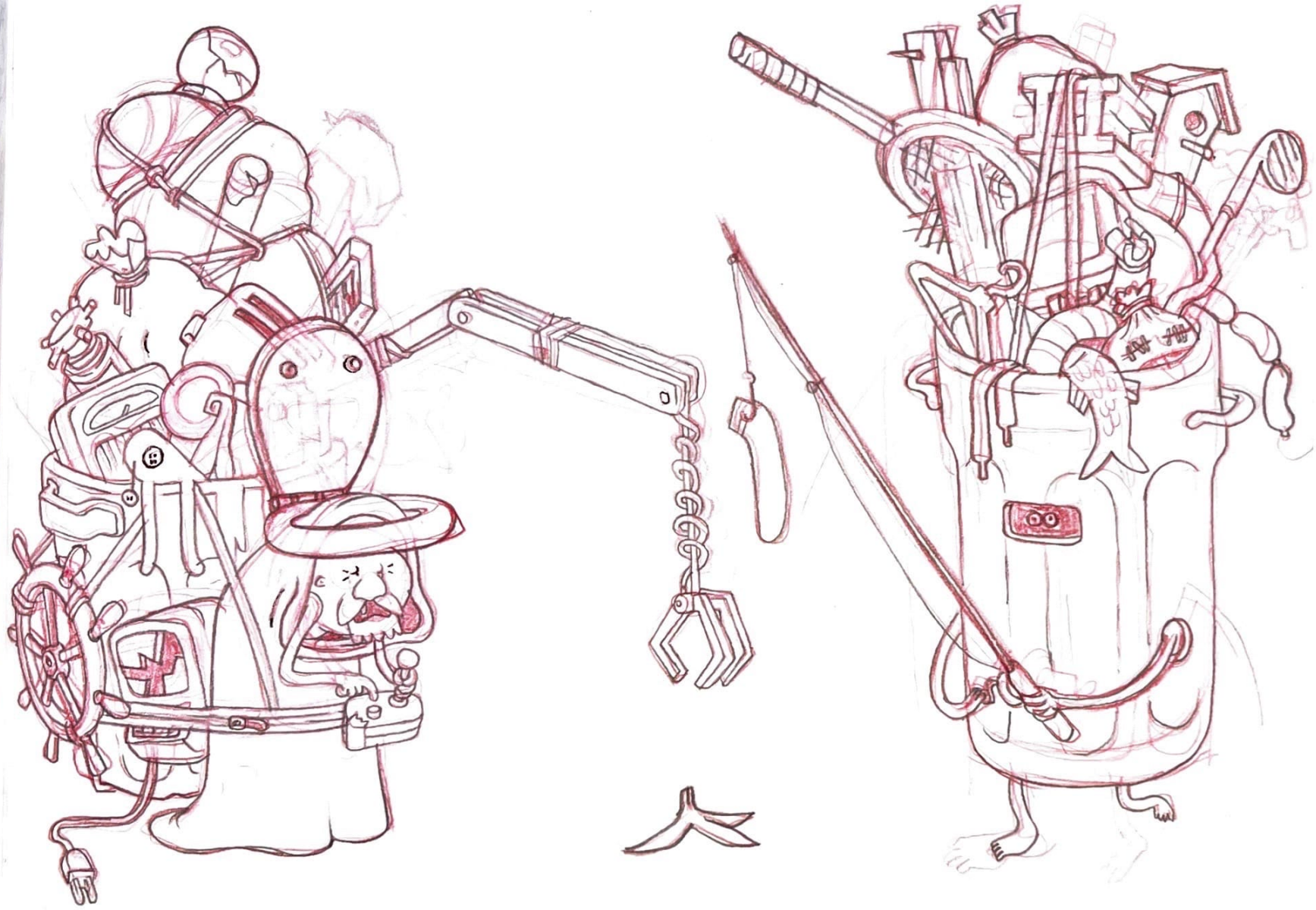
ANDY'S DESIGN TEST

1. b) Plant Scavangers



4. Golden pig armed beast with intestines falling out.

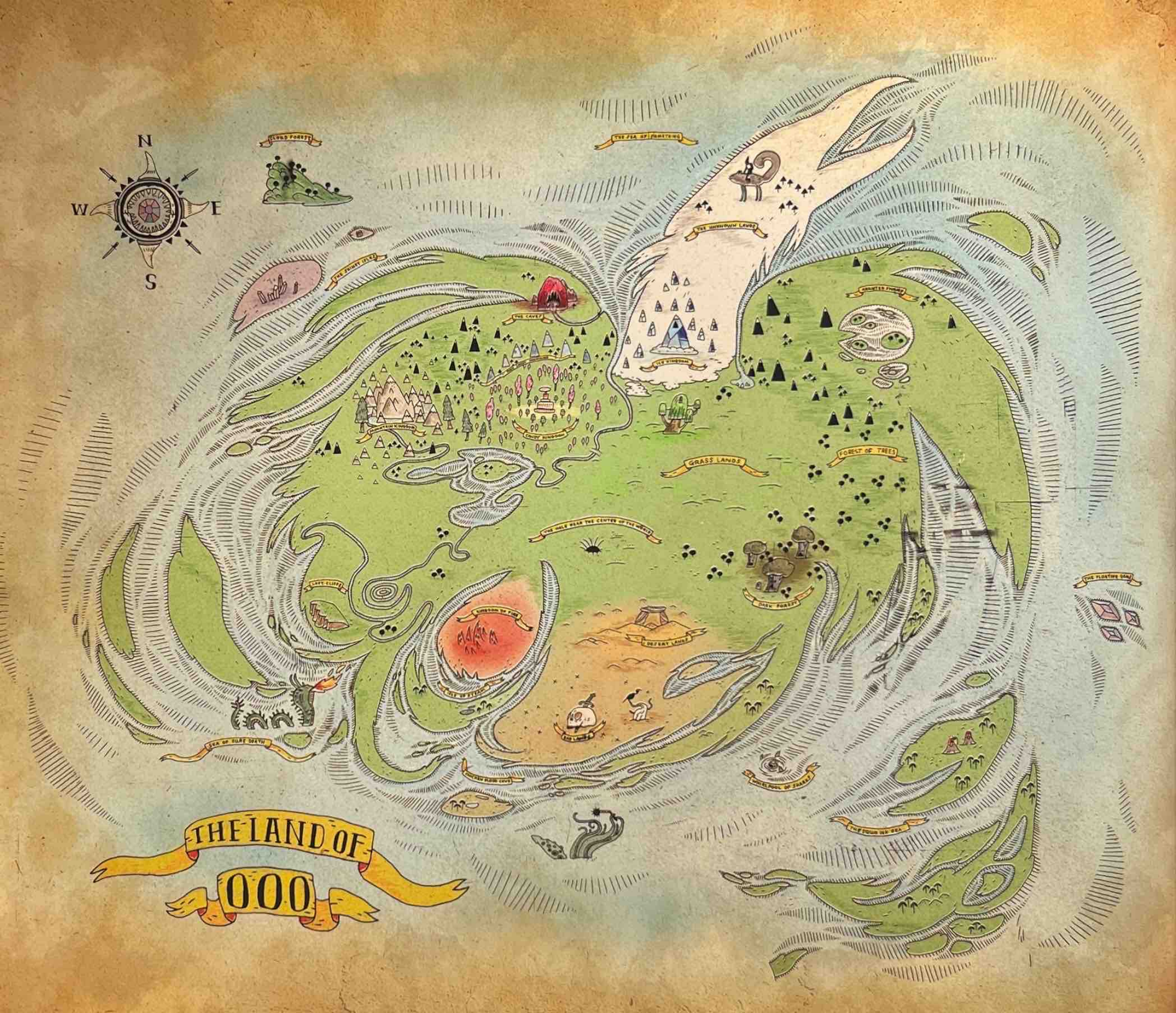


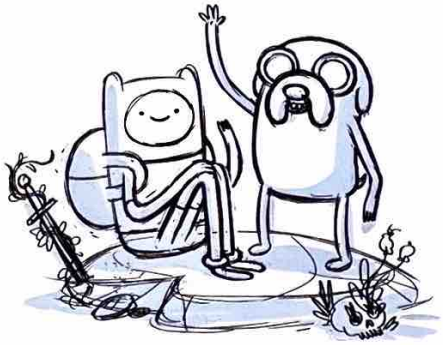


This spread: Some of the original designs from Andy Ristaino's design test, which secured his position as a character and prop designer.




BUILDING
THE
TREE HOUSE


N
W
E
S
CLOUD FOREST
THE SEA OF FORGETTING
THE UNKNOWN LANDS
THE JOURNEY BEGINS
THE CAVES
HAUNTED PHARM
ICE KINGDOM
CANDY KINGDOM
MOUNTAIN KINGDOM
GRASS LANDS
FOREST OF TREES
THE HOLE NEAR THE CENTER OF THE EARTH
CAKE CLIFFS
KINGDOM OF FIRE
DARK FOREST
DEFEAT LANDS
VALLEY OF STENCH
THE LAND OF BONES
SEA OF PURE DEATH
THE FLOATING GEM
THE POOL OF SNAKES
THE POISON IVY SEA
THE LAND OF
OOO



The Land of Ooo rests on an island of indeterminate scale surrounded by a sea of radioactive detritus and sunken prewar high-rise apartment buildings. The topography of the land includes wildly varying and exciting features, perfect for exploration and adventuring. There are (semi) natural wonders: deserts, ice mountains, churning fire pits, dark forests, and active volcanoes. The landscape is littered with the wreckage of the previous human civilization, half-buried, sunken, and overgrown with foliage. There are numerous access points to underground caverns, subterranean cities, and dungeons. The weather is temperate, and the beach, forest, desert, and ice-covered mountainous areas are easily accessible at any time for recreation. The occasional knife storm simply requires finding suitable advance shelter from the showers of dagger blades.

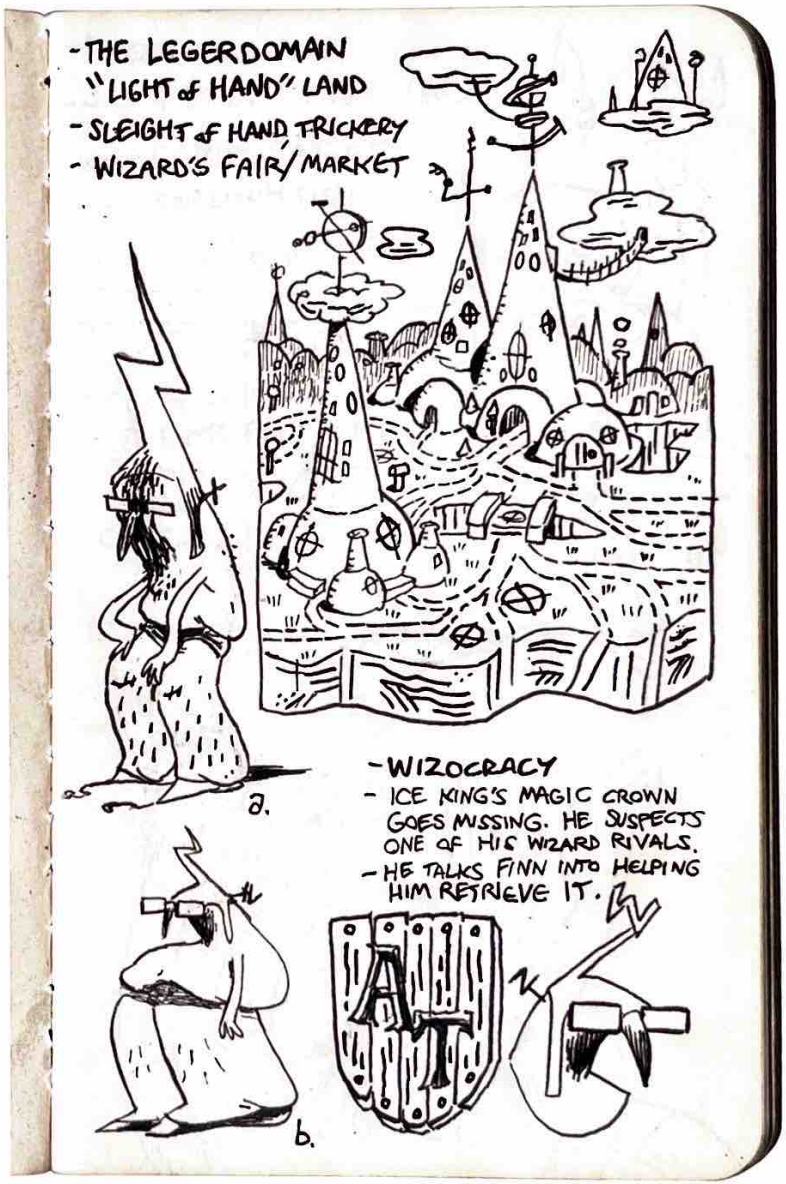
In Ooo there are multitudes of kingdoms to explore. The Candy Kingdom is centrally located and constructed over a toxic river of radioactive sludge. This kingdom is one of the most populous and impressive of all the kingdoms of Ooo, with residential neighborhoods, business districts, and a convenient public transportation system. Ruled by Princess Bubblegum, the Candy People live here in relative peace, guarded by the gigantic Gumball Guardians and their princess's scientific know-how. Inside the royal castle there are multitudes of laboratories and testing facilities used for the princess's experiments, as well as a few standard-issue dungeons. Most things here are constructed with candy, including the kingdom's inhabitants.

(Continued on page 192)

Opposite: A map of the island of Ooo in broad strokes, with much exploration left to be done. Illustrated by Ghostshrimp.

Left: Sketch for a promotional illustration by Phil Rynda.

Right: A page from Adam Muto's sketchbook, with early concept development of a wizard's market.



CANDY KINGDOM



Designer Santino Lascano on drawing the seedy part of town: The thinking for this area was that it used to be the up-and-coming neighborhood when the Candy Kingdom was still new. As with any city, the area aged and people moved to newer parts, abandoning this particular place. I would say that this seedy part of town is still contained within the walls of the Candy Kingdom, but it's been covered by the newer establishments and houses.



Opposite: The Candy Tavern near the exterior wall of the Candy Kingdom is where some "bad elements" can be found congregating. From "Apple Thief."

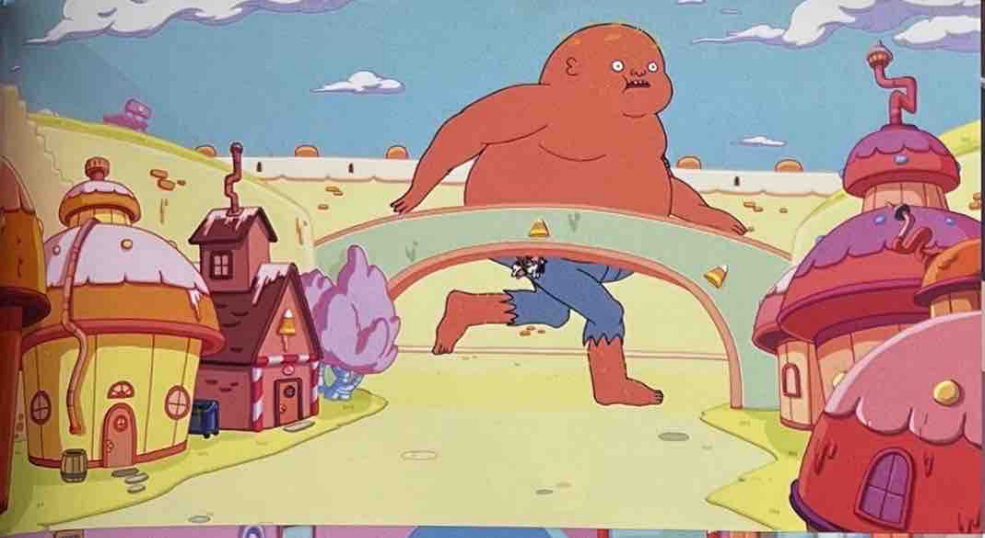
Above: The Candy Kingdom in a wide, establishing shot of the entire vicinity, including the surrounding cotton-candy forest.

CANDY KINGDOM



This page: Evening views around the Candy Kingdom village, protected by its walls and the Gumball Guardians vigilantly perched around its exterior.

Opposite: "Root Beer Guy" expanded the view of life in the Candy Kingdom outside of the royal castle. Its regular citizens work full-time jobs, commute on the candy subway, and shop at Pudding's Hardware. Background designers for this episode were Santino Lascano and Derek Hunter, background painters were Sandra Calleros, Ron Russell, and Teri Shikasho, and the color stylist was Catherine E. Simmonds.












Pudding's
HARDWARE

ICE KINGDOM







(Continued from page 187)

The Ice Kingdom is a snow-covered range of ice mountains ruled by the Ice King and his companion penguins. Snow Golems live among snowy foothills, and this kingdom's primary feature is the hollow mountain ice cave in which the Ice King lives. In the Ice King's main living quarters he has his basic amenities: a queen-size ice-block bed with leopard-print bedclothes, a modest bathroom, a drum set, a weight-lifting bench, a computer, and an easy chair. In multiple subcaverns below are stashes of artifacts from his forgotten past, collections of ninja gear, and a shrine devoted to enormous ice statues of his own creation: the fan-fictional, gender-swapped versions of Finn and Jake, Fionna and Cake. Also living below are the rarely seen, semiuseless guardian Ice Toads, Ice Bulls, and the Ice-o-pede.

(Continued on page 197)

Opposite and above: Views around the Ice Kingdom and the exterior of the Ice King's hollow mountain home.

Right: One of Ice King's sub-chambers in his cavernous ice home is a shrine to ninja-movie memorabilia and artifacts. From "The Chamber of Frozen Blades."





FIRE KINGDOM



Above: A wide view of the Fire Kingdom exterior and entrance to the royal court where Jake first encounters Flame Princess on his quest to find Finn a new, age-appropriate teenage love interest. From "Incendium."

Right: A few citizens of the Fire Kingdom, including Flame Princess.









(Continued from page 192)

The Fire Kingdom is generally on fire, inhabited by flaming-hot beings of different sizes and shapes. Visitors to this kingdom need a fire-protection spell applied to themselves to prevent burning to a crisp. In the Flame King's throne room is a lamp where his daughter, Flame Princess, was imprisoned for most of her life. More recently, she usurped his throne and he got the lamp treatment. Depending on who is ruling, expect a kingdom run on either pure evil or brutal honesty.

The nether realm of Lumpy Space is an area accessible from Ooo's mainland via secret portals known only to its natives, such as Lumpy Space Princess. A password-protected frog sitting on a mushroom provides the tongue-grabbing-and-ingestion access to its internal throat portal necessary to travel to Lumpy Space. Once there, a flying lumpy car is required to travel from drippy cloud to drippy cloud to avoid falling into the Lumpy Abyss. Although Lumpy Space Princess occasionally visits her parents back home in Lumpy Space, she prefers to camp and eat beans, hobo-style, in the woods of Ooo.

The fearsome Nightosphere is a demonic hellscape accessible by mortals and vampires alike simply by drawing a mystical symbol, the Phil Face, dousing it with bug milk, and reciting the magical incantation. Demon hordes mill about here, guarding prisons and waiting in line to obtain appointments to see Hunson Abadeer, the eternal Lord of Evil. Or occasionally Marceline the Vampire Queen, his daughter, when she has to fill in for him.

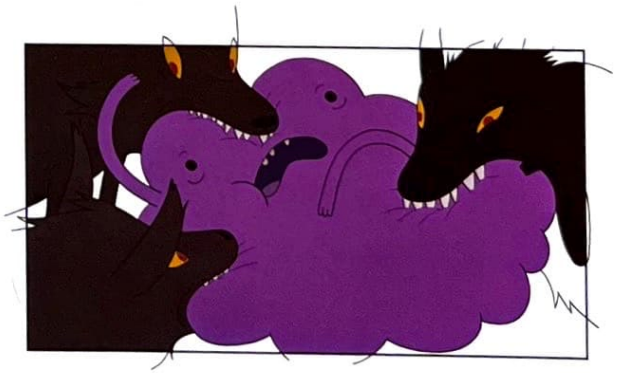
In the middle of a region of grassy hills is Finn and Jake's tree house. This hero's home contains multiple cozy rooms intertwined with tree limbs and areas hollowed into its interior. An airy kitchen with a breakfast nook is a pleasant place for preparing bacon pancakes, bibimbap, everything burritos, or the ultimate Time Sandwich. Finn and Jake share an upper chamber for sleeping; Finn in the monster-skin-blanket-covered bed and Jake nestled in a drawer. Accessible by plank-and-rope bridges and ladders, there are several upper rooms and lookouts in the higher parts of the tree. A ground-level shack-like vestibule of the tree house serves as a storage space for massive piles of golden coins and other adventuring refuse.

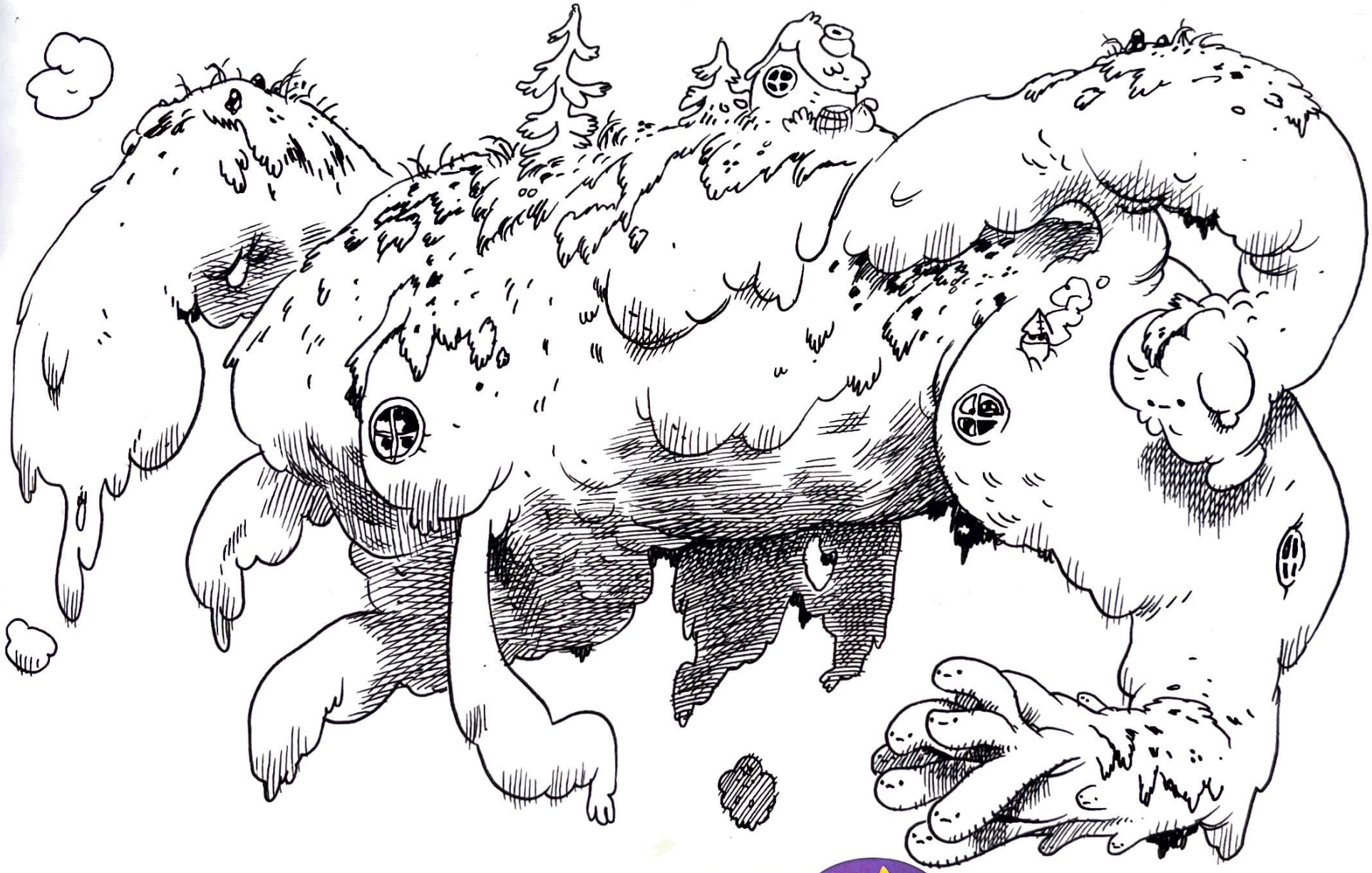
(Continued on page 202)

Opposite: Various scenes from the Fire Kingdom, including one of Flame Princess falling into a deep shaft into the Ooo depths after sharing a first kiss with Finn.

Above left: A special-pose model of the frog portal to Lumpy Space in action.

Above right and below: Lumpy Space Princess's hobo-style camp in the woods where she prefers to live, heating her beans over an open flame and occasionally being chewed on by wolves.





Above: A concept drawing of what Lumpy Space might look like, by Thomas Herpich: a landscape, house, and Lumpy Space People fused together. Lumpy Space Princess hovers underneath the mass.



"RETURN TO THE NIGHTOSPHERE"



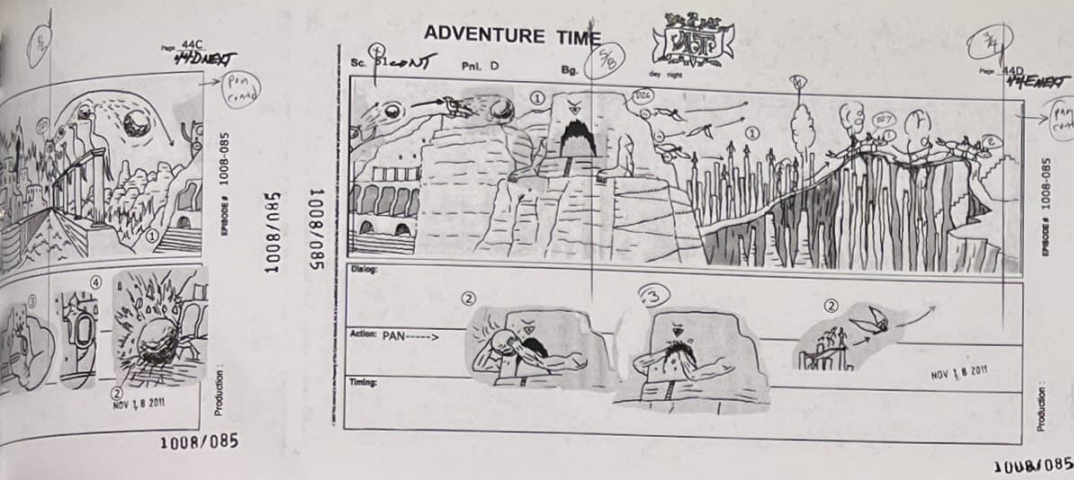


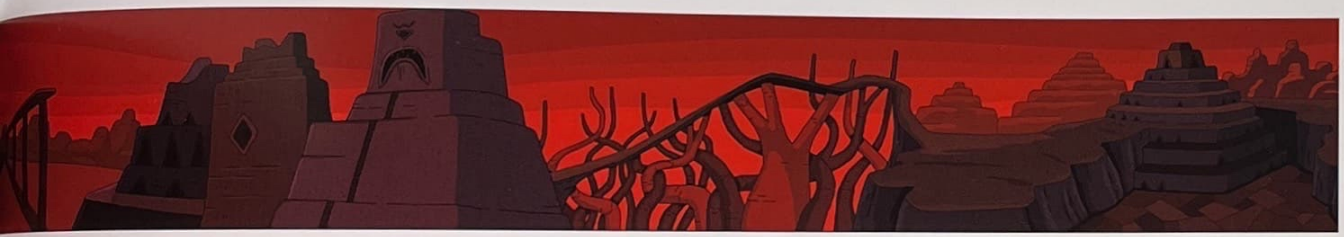
















This spread: The massively long pan shot from "Return to the Nightosphere": storyboarded by Jesse Moynihan (top row); background art (second row); and stitched-together shots as seen in the episode with animation of flames and creatures, shown here in two halves (bottom two rows). This episode's background art was designed by Ghostshrimp (Dan James), Santino Lascano, and Derek Hunter; painted by Martin Ansolabehere, Sandra Calleros, and Ron Russel; and color styled by Catherine E. Simmonds and Ron Russell.





Top and above: Two backgrounds from "The Duke."

Opposite: A concept drawing of Finn and Jake's tree house exterior by Ghostshrimp (Dan James).

(Continued from page 197)

The land of Ooo, so ripe with this scenic splendor, narrowly avoided being artistically handicapped by standard-definition broadcast. The transition to all-digital television broadcasting in the United States went into effect in 2009, finally pushing all standard-definition television sets (the older, lower-resolution, 4:3 ratio screens) into obsolescence. *Adventure Time*'s development brackets this event, with the original short being produced for television in standard definition. The series commenced production right on the cusp of the complete transition to high-definition, so it was never hamstrung by the need to produce episodes that would work both in standard definition and widescreen high-definition, as some unfortunate productions had to deal with just several years earlier.

[Designer] Robertryan Cory: Around 2004 to 2009, cartoons were being storyboarded in widescreen HD format, but all the action had to take place in the center SD safe area . . . so you'd have all this dead space to the left and right that you had to fill but couldn't place anything important in.

In contrast to many cartoon series' backgrounds, which recede behind the characters in a generic fashion, *Adventure Time*'s backgrounds are snapshots of a living, breathing world that are as essential to the show as any of its characters. One can imagine turning over any *Adventure Time* rock to find a secret dungeon passage or friendly worm with whom to converse. The inventiveness and specificity of the background art matches that of the characters. The immersion in the world feels complete.

During the show's development, these background designs did not materialize fully formed from the ether. It took several false starts and experiments in different directions to arrive at the Ooo Finn and Jake know today.

Pat McHale: We had trouble pinning down a background style because we wanted something that felt flat and simple like the pilot, but could do more. The show was going to be more cinematic than the pilot. [Art director] Nick Jennings tried all sorts of styles, some of which were pretty nice.

(Continued on page 207)





BACKGROUND DEVELOPMENT

Art director Nick Jennings, on searching for the right background style: At the beginning of *Adventure Time* we were trying to find a style for the environments that felt unique and would work with the stories that Pen wanted to tell. The sort of classic painting style below was inspired by Thomas Hart Benton's paintings. I love his work and this stylistic approach goes right to the adventure side of *Adventure Time*. But if we went with this style for the art direction it would not only be hard to get through all the work, but also it is such a departure from Pen's natural way to draw. I think in the beginning he was looking for something that wasn't really his style. But his style is great, and ultimately going with something closer to what he naturally loves to do himself is better.

Below: A background style test by art director Nick Jennings that employed a smooth-painted rendering technique.



Right: A background test that more closely approaches the final flat-color fill style used in the show, avoiding most gradients and painterly rendering. "We started looking at Ghostshrimp (Dan James)'s work and Pen was really excited about it. I felt it was a good fit for the show. The image at right is something I did influenced by Dan's work. Dan draws in a very unique style that is his own. This image has various types of textures on the ground, trees, rocks, and sky. I was playing around with these textures, trying to come up with a good combination that we could use in the show. Ultimately we used some of these ideas and threw others away. In television animation it is important to establish a look that is doable in the production schedule that you have. It is also just as important to see as much of the creator's unique style make it into the show. I think *Adventure Time* does that perfectly." –Nick Jennings





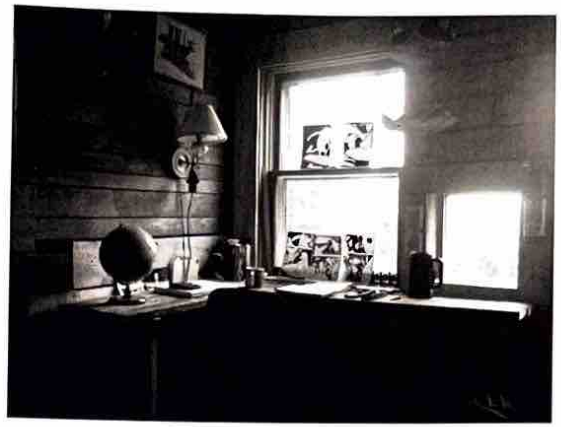
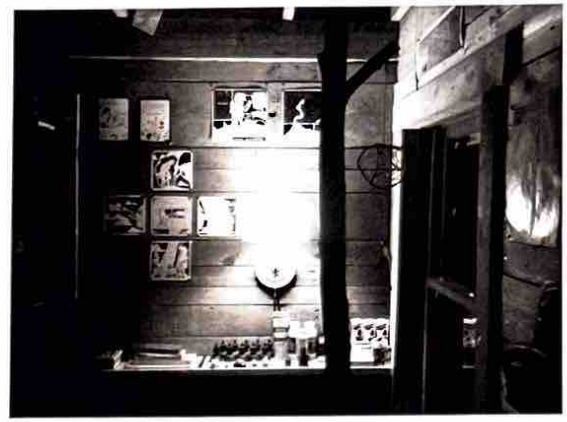


Left: Two color variations of another early, rejected direction for the backgrounds of the series. According to Nick Jennings, "these represent something closer to Pen's work but in a more adventure comic book–style: smooth gradients, black ink line, flat textures. These elements are interesting but still not really unique."

OBSERVATORY.
BED ROOM.
LIVING ROOM.
HOLLOW TREE.
TREE LADDER.
ELEVATOR ROOM.
PULLEY ELEVATOR.
BATHROOM.
KITCHEN.
MUD ROOM.
DEN.
POOP BUCKET.

ICE KINGDOM
MYSTERY MOUNTAINS

SPOOKY FOREST




(Continued from page 202)

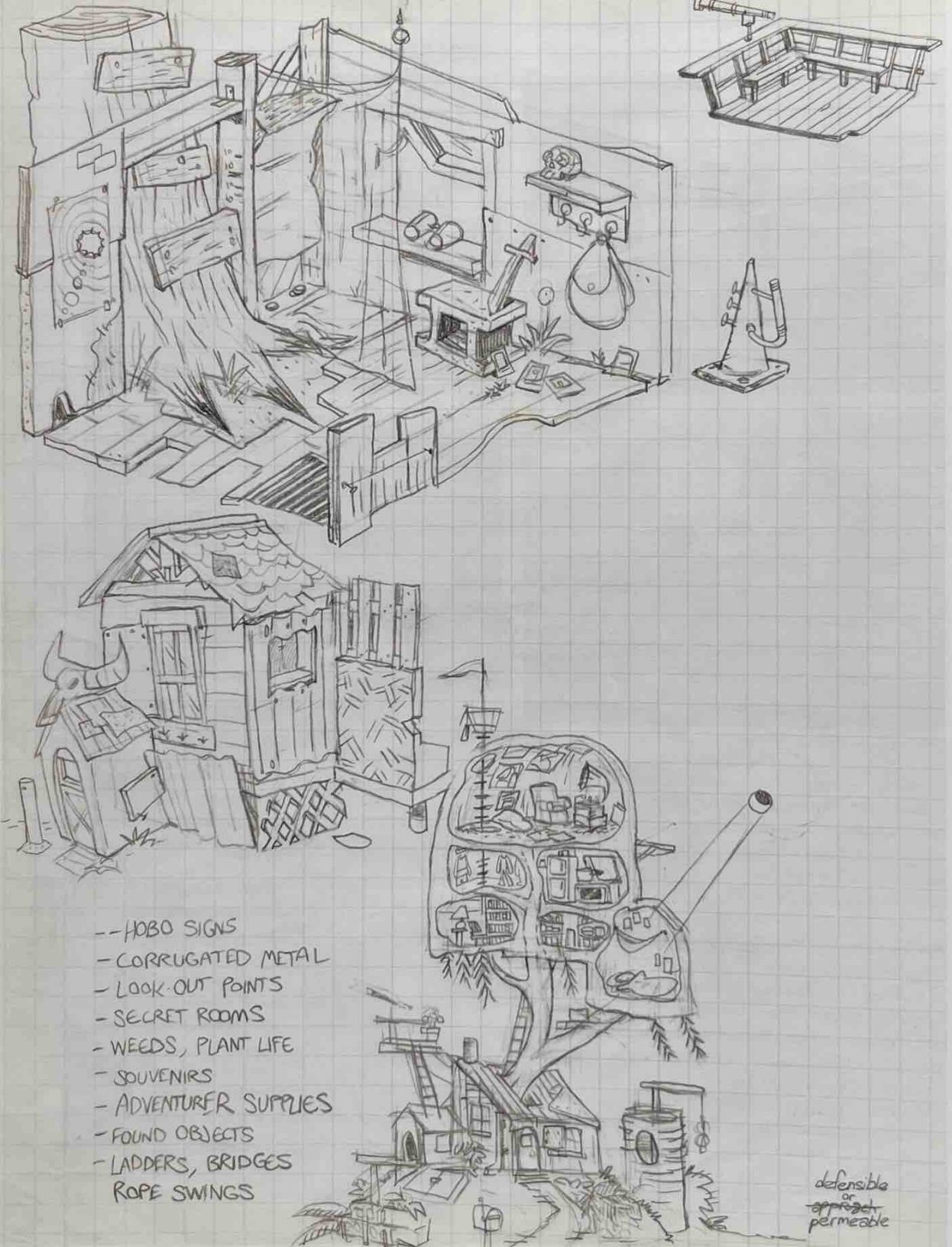
Nick Jennings, a veteran of shows such as *SpongeBob SquarePants*, characterized his initial job as analyzing the pilot and Pen's work in general to understand the show creator's idiosyncrasies and art preferences, and attempting to extrapolate a new direction from these discoveries. He identified flat areas of bold colors with cartoon line art as Pen's staples. Still, a central question remained: "How were these new high-definition and 'more cinematic' backgrounds going to look specifically?" The short pilot only established basic elements to work with—the grassy hills and the Ice Kingdom's triangular mountains were there, but what would everything else look like?

Several diverging styles were experimented with, including backgrounds with naturalistic drawings of a forest and backgrounds with gradiated colors and painterly rendering. The network executives questioned where the style from the pilot had gone. The backgrounds still weren't feeling right. Additionally, all the extra detail and rendering in these tests would have proven impractical to use for the television show's schedule and budget.

Pat McHale: But then [background designer] Ghostshrimp [Dan James] became available, and we all realized his style was pretty much perfect. It was a balance of graphic design simplicity, but with a really epic feel to it—so we could tell bigger, more adverture-y stories, too. His drawings were easy to color and had a simplicity that matched the characters. We could add nice shadow effects and stuff when we colored it, and that gave it more depth. Plus he was really into

Opposite: More concept art of the tree house contents and three views of the exterior by Ghostshrimp.

Above: Background designer Ghostshrimp's New Hampshire cabin, which he built and lived in for three years in his cousin's one-hundred-acre wood before moving to Los Angeles. This, and an active, outdoorsy childhood, directly helped inspire the land of Ooo's design.



building up the mythology by putting secret stuff in the backgrounds. He was thinking about the world . . . not just drawing a drawing. He was putting himself into it.

Ghostshrimp's dedication to adding history and life to his backgrounds matched the fervor of the storyboard artists for adding specific story and character details to their boards. It was drawn from a childhood filled with the tactile chaos of nature.

Ghostshrimp: I had the northern equivalent of a Mark Twain childhood. Most of the time I was out exploring the forest, climbing trees, following streams, swimming in ponds. That's really where my imagination lives. We moved to the seacoast of New Hampshire when I was twelve years old, and I brought that forest with me in my mind, and it's been there ever since. My whole life, when I dream, it takes place in those woods where I grew up. That's where it all comes from. There is daytime in the forest, when you're invited in to play with the animals, and then there is nighttime, when you're dared to come in and play with the ghosts. The forest is to people what the ocean is to fish. Absolutely anything can be in there.

Before I moved to L.A. to work for Cartoon Network I was living in a small cabin that I built myself, deep in a one-hundred-acre forest that my cousin owned in New Hampshire. I lived in that cabin for three years, and worked on it the whole time. That experience was hugely influential in how I went on to design the world for *Adventure Time*. The cabin was not nearly as cool as Finn and Jake's tree house, but it has the same feel. The interior walls were made of old pallets that I pulled apart. The boards were all going this way and that, and they were different sizes—it was funny. My buddy Tight Jeans Moclinson saw Finn and Jake's tree house for the first time and was like, "That's your cabin!" He was right—it was what I would have built if I was as good at carpentry as I am at drawing. Hopefully someday I will be!

That's the idea behind what I'm doing now. When I took the job at Cartoon Network my plan was to save up enough money to buy my own forest in northern New England, and turn it into the Ghostshrimp National Forest. The plan worked, and now we've got



twenty-five acres here, and we're two years into the lifelong project of turning it into a living illustration.

My goal as an illustrator is to make the most creative and personal work possible, and to me, that begins with the things I do when I'm not drawing. At a certain point I realized that if I could live my entire life as creatively as possible, and make everything in it as personal as possible, my work would benefit tremendously. I think it's helpful to see yourself as a character in a book that you're writing, and you can always ask yourself, "Am I the character I want to be?" It's about removing the lines between your dreams and your life, and your life and your work. To me, they should all be the same thing. When Pen and Pat told me they wanted *Adventure Time* to take place in a Ghostshrimp world, that's exactly what they got. I gave them the world I want to live in. I turned my head inside out, and they filled it with people.

When I draw, I always put in little clues that hint at the deeper secrets hidden beneath the surface. Most of the time I don't even know what those secrets are, and that makes them even better! With *Adventure Time* I got to take that to a whole new level. People always ask me why the underworld is filled with police cars, and their guess is as good as mine! I just saw it in my head, and it looked awesome, so I drew it. Pen is like that, too—when we were finalizing designs for the tree house he told me to put a trap door in the middle of the kitchen floor. He didn't know what was down there, and neither did I, but we both loved the sense of unseen mystery it created. When I first took the job, Pen said he wanted a beehive mind state for the people who worked on the show, and I think we definitely had that. There was only one time that I can remember him not liking what I came up with, and that was on the first Lich episode. He wanted an old subway station, and I incorporated that, but I also expanded it into an ancient underground canal system, too, like one was built on top of the other. I always try to bypass the obvious solutions and dig deeper to find something new and interesting, but this time he wanted a very literal depiction of a modern subway. It's too bad, 'cause those were some of my best backgrounds, and that turned out to be such an epic episode.

Ghostshrimp's efforts fit well with the whole team. He was clear on his job, too: He needed to bring his distinct personality to the work, contribute a personal effort, dig deep, and enjoy the job by staying excited and inspired.



The background designer generally receives a combination of new locations and old location updates or new angles to draw per episode. The storyboards the designer receives will often contain design concepts for new characters and environments that are drawn specifically enough that they can be directly adapted.

(Continued on page 222)

Opposite: Tree house concept drawings by Adam Muto, one of a few reference points that Ghostshrimp had to work from when designing the final look of Finn and Jake's home.

Above: An interior view of the tree house from the season one episode "Rainy Day Daydream."

THE TREE HOUSE



Opposite and above: Interior views of the tree house and an exterior tree house bridge from the season one episode "Rainy Day Daydream."

Right: View from the ground up at Marceline in a tree house window from "Evicted!"



THE TREE HOUSE





Left: Spot the differences in the day/normal and night/disturbed views of the tree house kitchen and dining area from "The Jiggler."

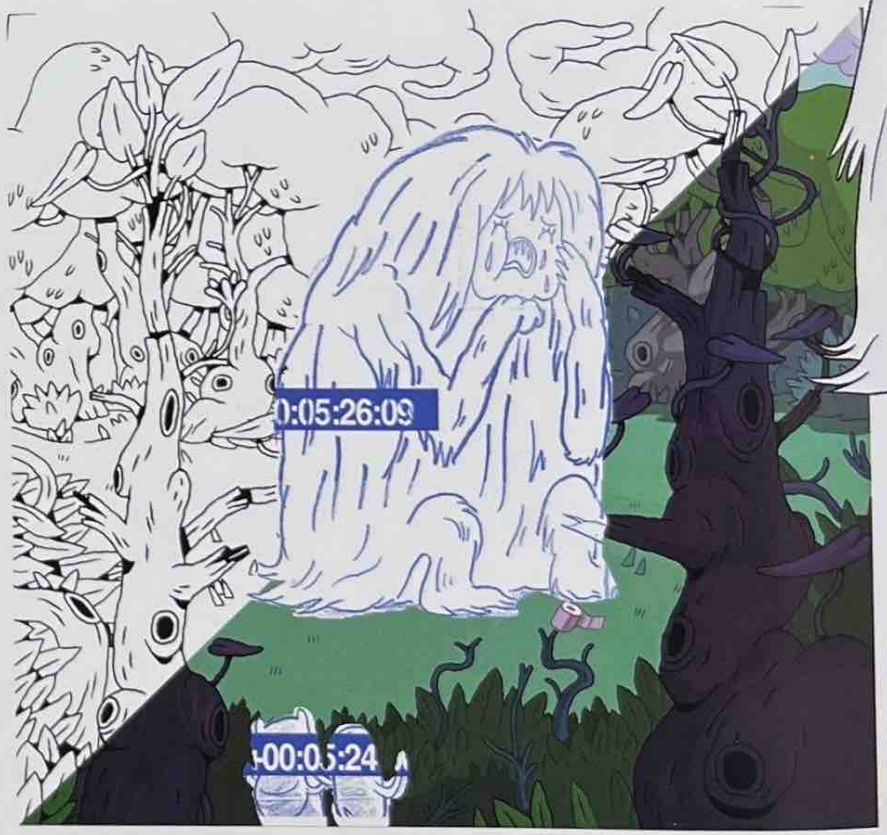
Opposite: Reverse view of the cooking area of the kitchen.



"BLOOD UNDER THE SKIN"







Top: A long horizontal pan, or tracking shot, from the episode "Blood Under the Skin."

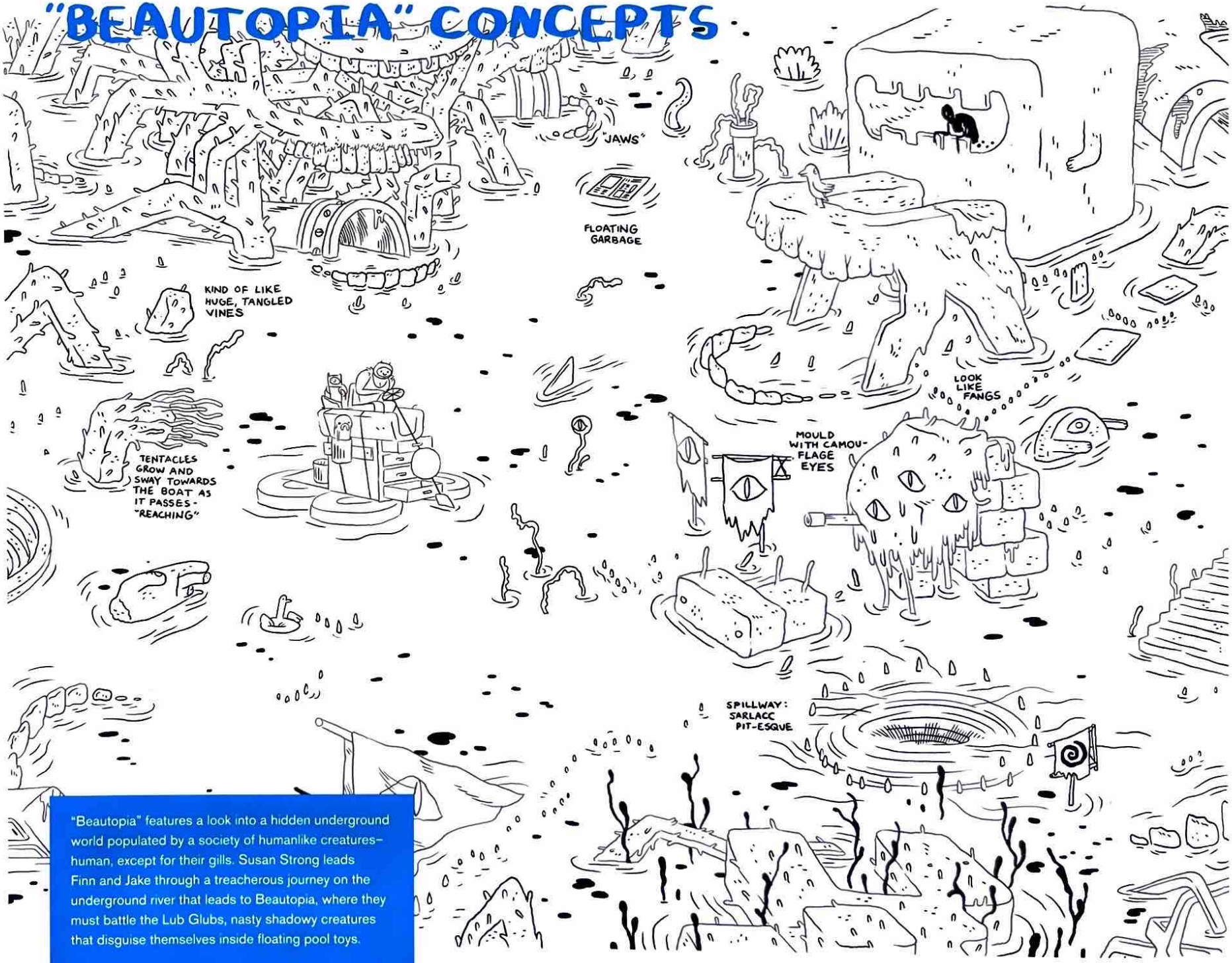
Above left: The elements of a scene are established in the storyboard. Here, Finn and Jake see a monster in a vertical pan shot from "Blood Under the Skin," boarded by Cole Sanchez and Benton Conner.

Above right: Background designer Ghostshrimp drew black-and-white line art based on the storyboard requirements while adding his signature embellishments and details. Background painters then colored it digitally.

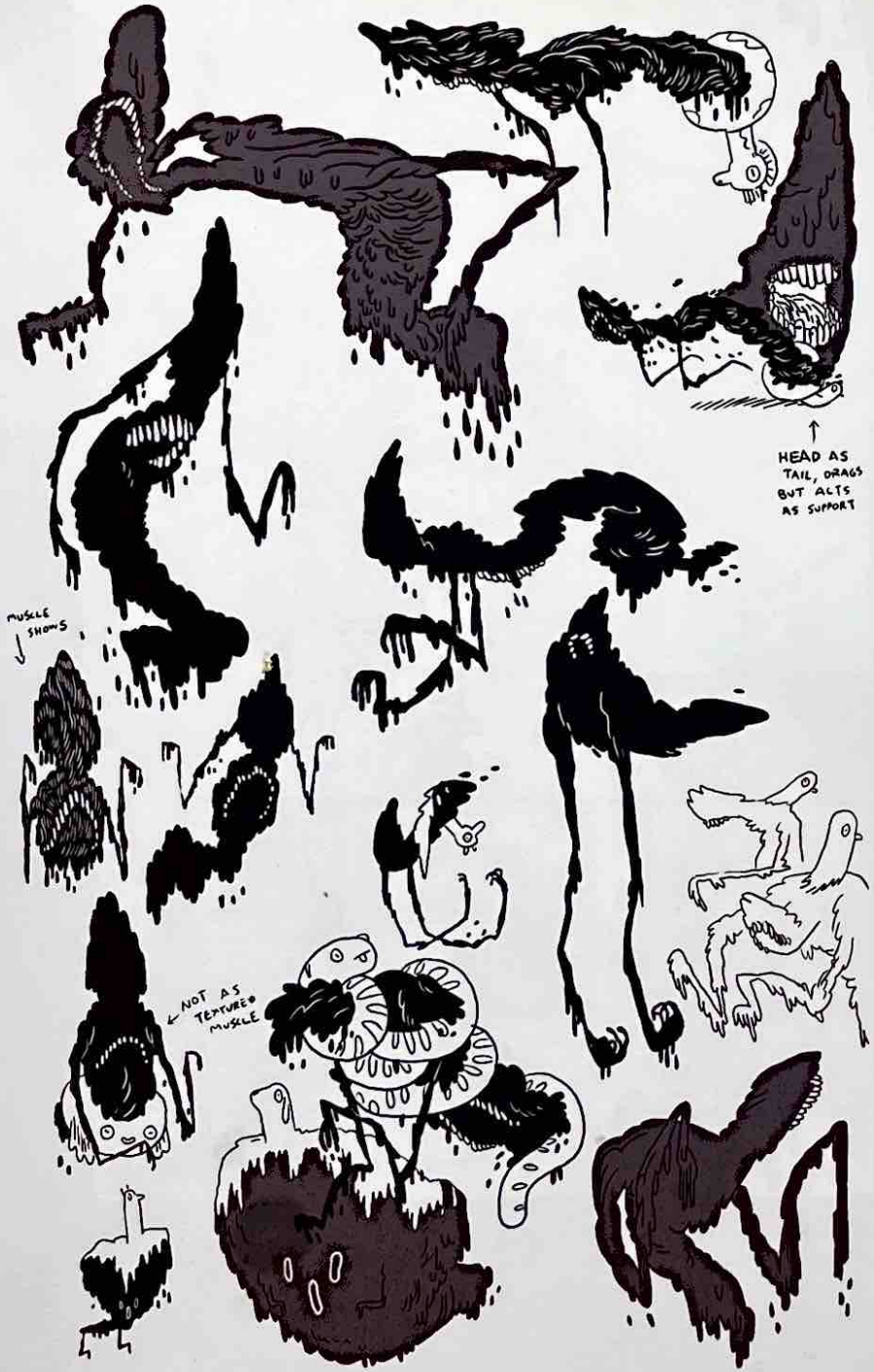


Right: The fully colored background art with its tree overlays that are placed above the animation layer to create the illusion of depth in the scene. The overlays also provide clues about the scale of the large female Red-faced Monster crying in the clearing (as seen in the final shot, inset right). Background painters for this episode were Martin Ansolabehere, Sandra Calleros, and Ron Russell.

"BEAUTOPIA" CONCEPTS



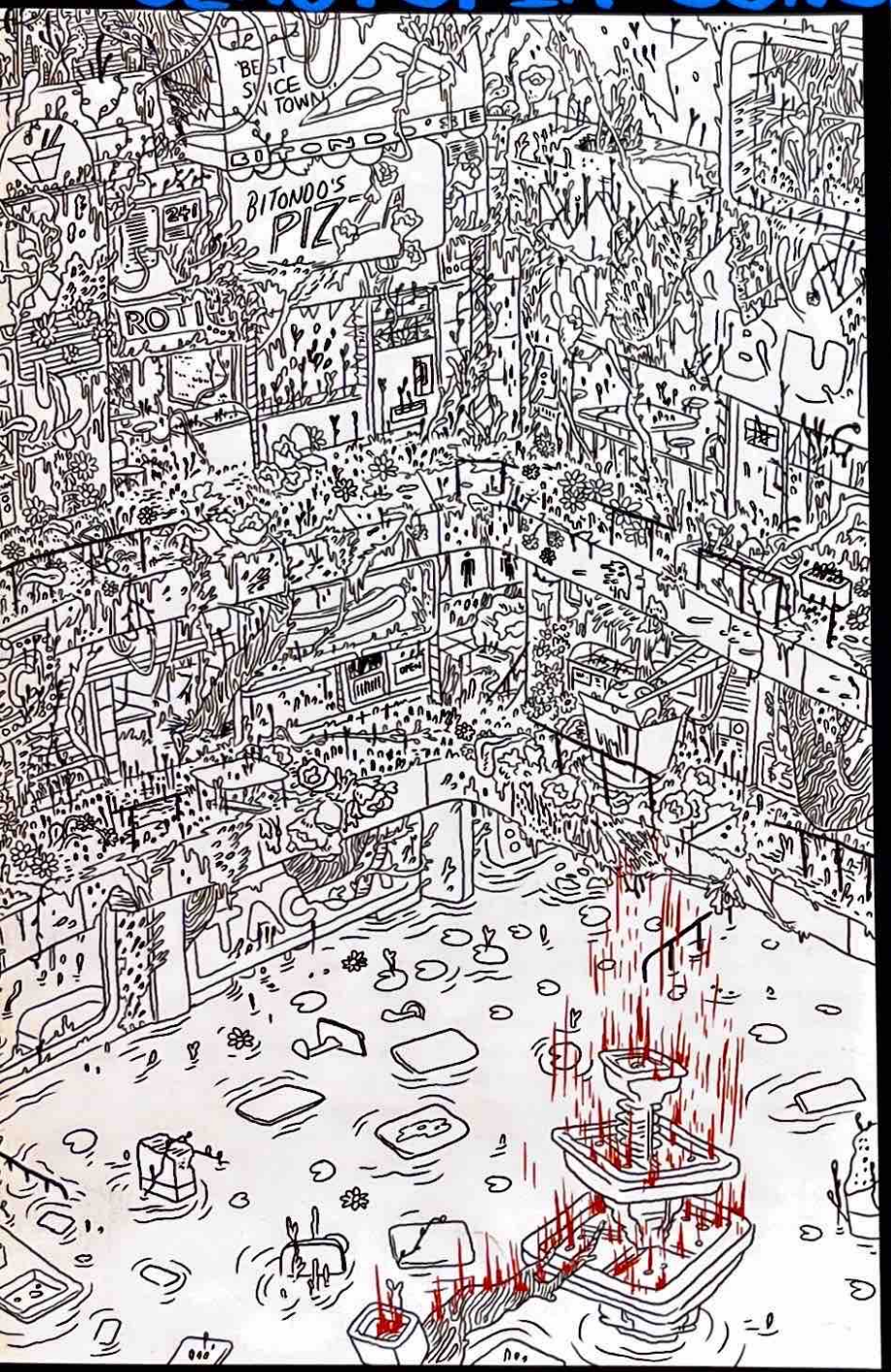
"Beautopia" features a look into a hidden underground world populated by a society of humanlike creatures–human, except for their gills. Susan Strong leads Finn and Jake through a treacherous journey on the underground river that leads to Beautopia, where they must battle the Lub Glubs, nasty shadowy creatures that disguise themselves inside floating pool toys.



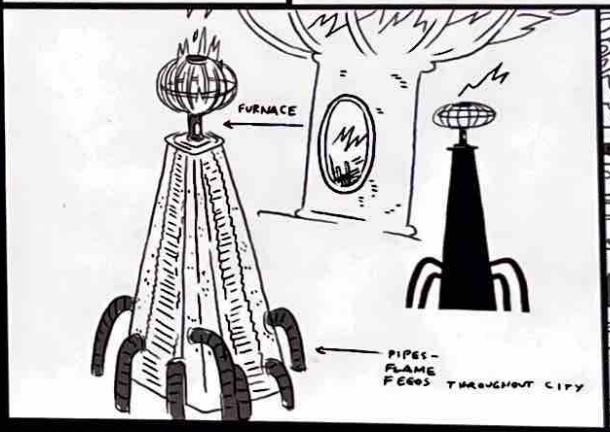


This spread: "This was actually my first gig for *Adventure Time*, and months before I got hired as a regular. Adam Muto and Rebecca Sugar asked me to do up some concept art for a story they were about to board. They gave me the broad outline of what would happen in the episode and what they needed from me. I think they even had an initial sketch for some blobby-looking monsters hiding in pool toys that Pen did. The list included stuff like the garbage boat, Lub Glubs, the Beautopia reveal, the ziggurat, and maybe some other scenery and background stuff. I was surprised how much they ended up using from my sketches in the final board. It was my first time doing any sort of work on the show, so I assumed I was doing everything wrong. Anyway, once I became a designer on the show, I ended up getting a crack at drawing the final models for a lot of the designs I initially sketched out, which timed out nicely." –Michael DeForge

"BEAUTOPIA" CONCEPTS

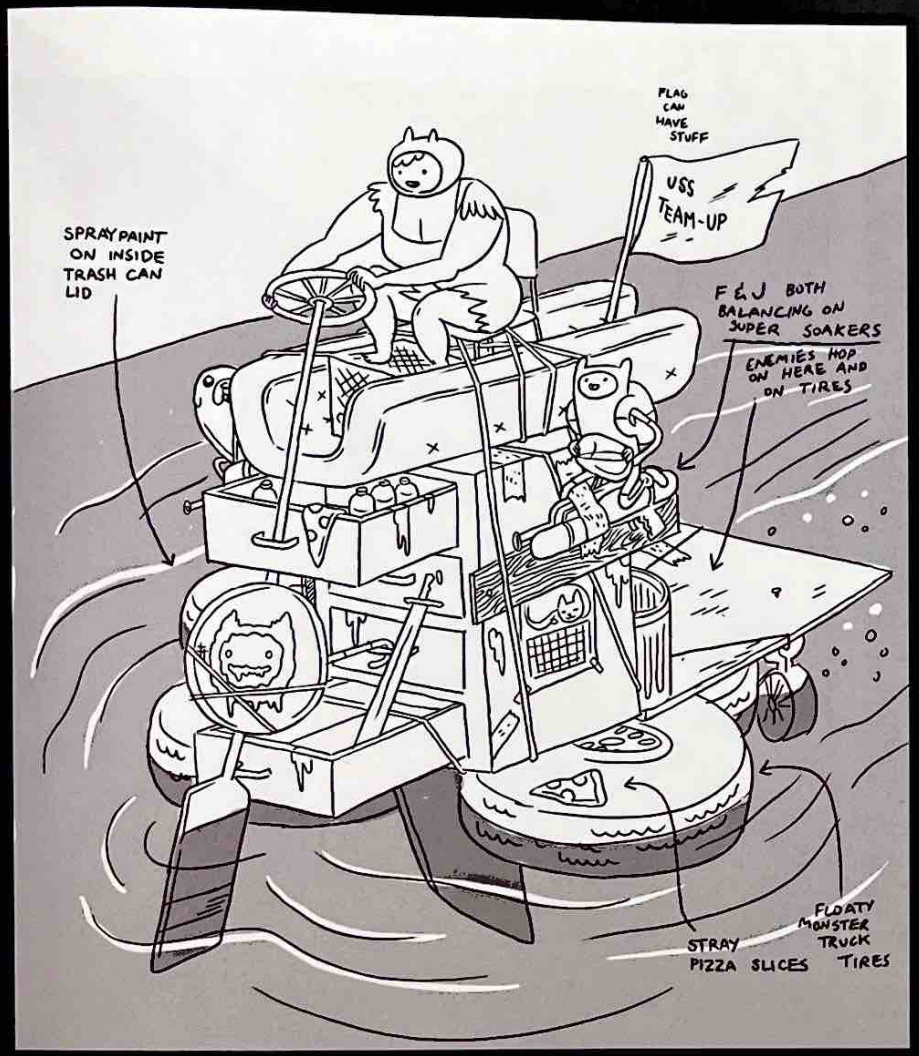


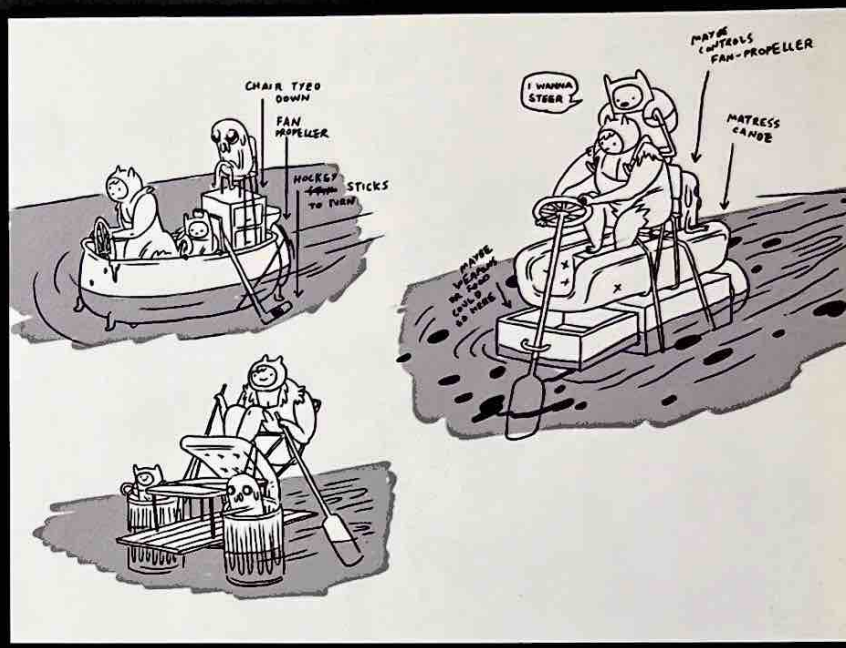


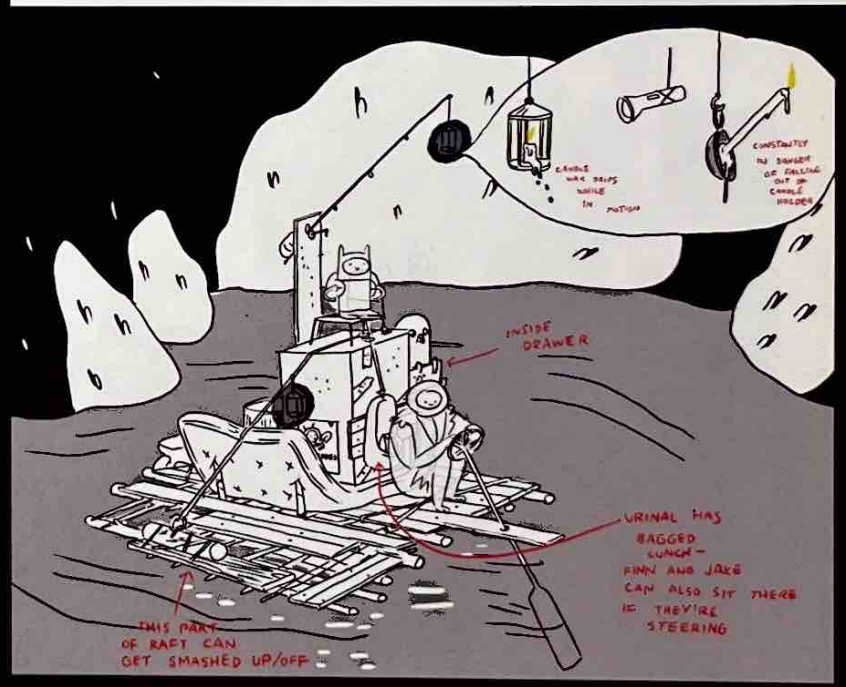


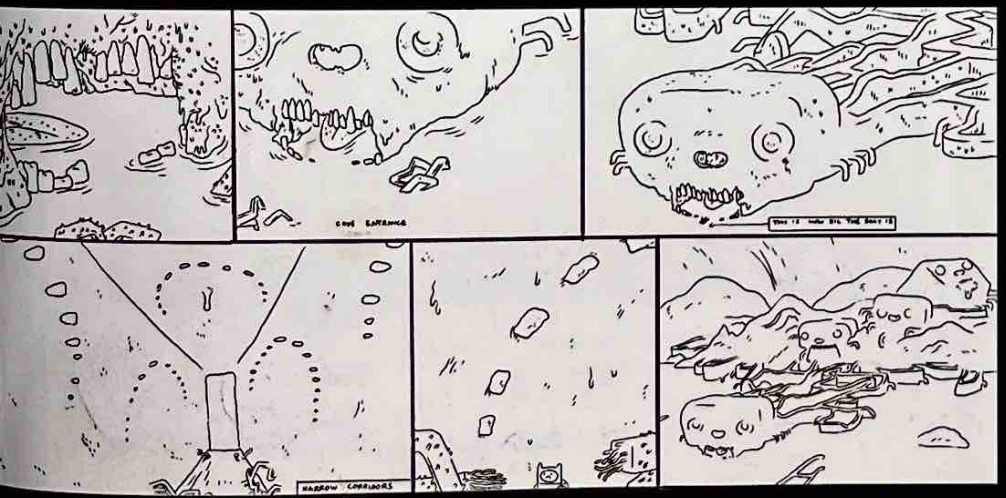


This spread: Designer Michael DeForge turned in an extensive collection of drawings for the season three episode "Beautopia."

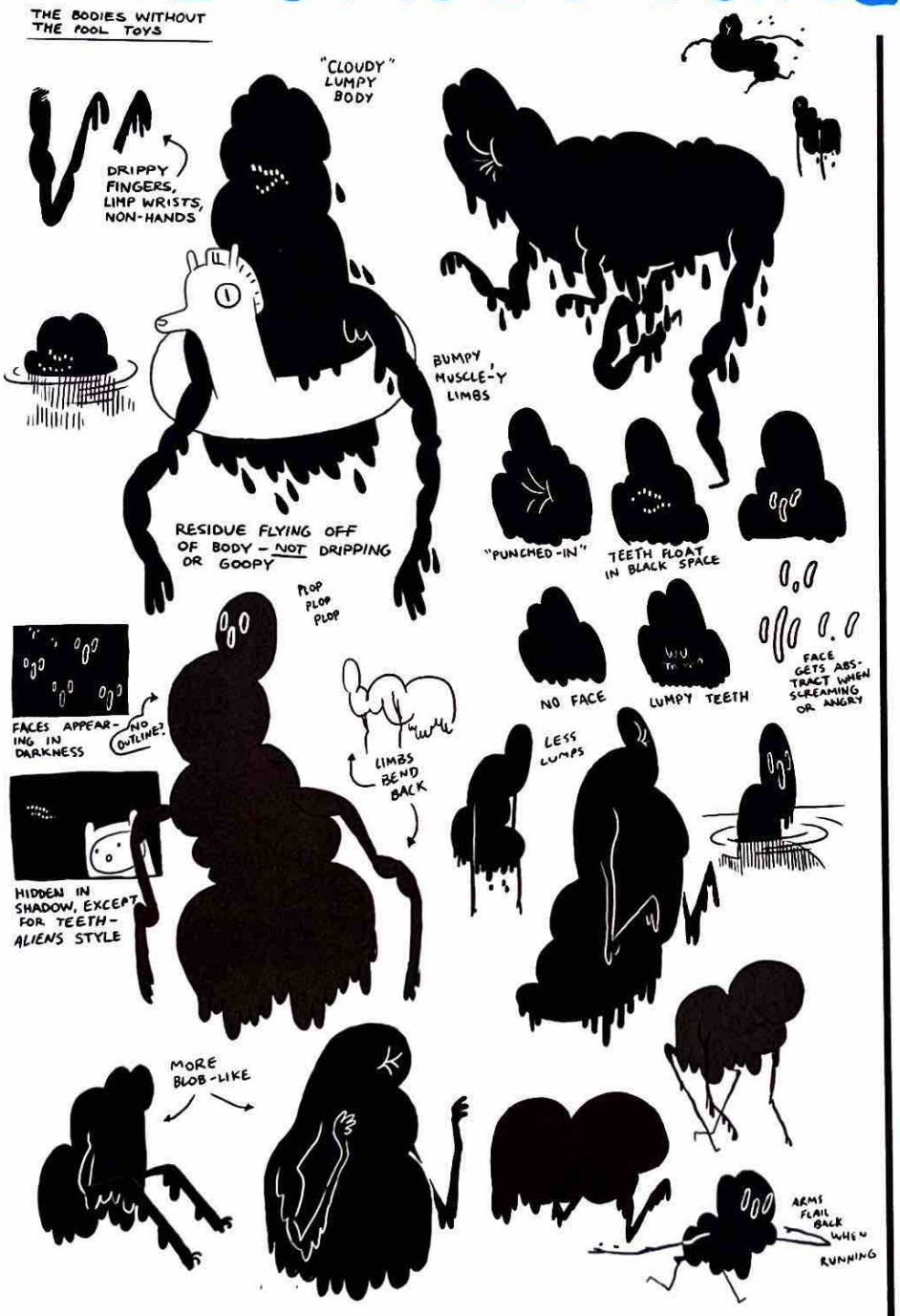

FLAG CAN HAVE STUFF
USS TEAM-UP
SPRAYPAINT ON INSIDE TRASH CAN LID
F & J BOTH BALANCING ON SUPER SOAKERS
ENEMIES HOP ON HERE AND ON TIRES
STRAY PIZZA SLICES
FLOATY MONSTER TRUCK TIRES

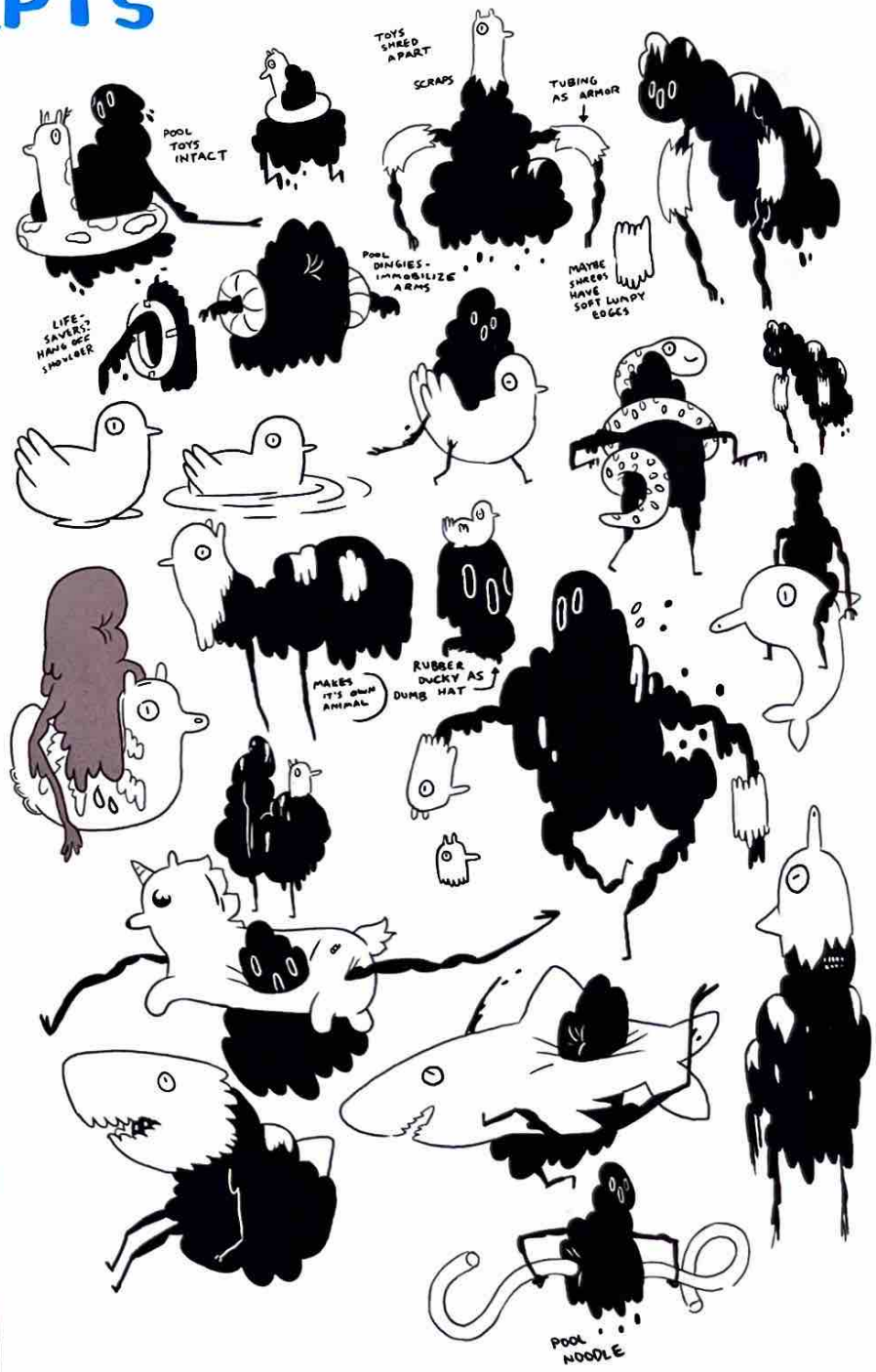

CHAIR TIED DOWN
FAN PROPELLER
HOCKEY STICKS TO TURN
I WANNA STEER
MAYBE CONTROLS FAN-PROPELLER
MATRESS CANOE
MAYBE WEAPON OR CANOE GOES ON HERE

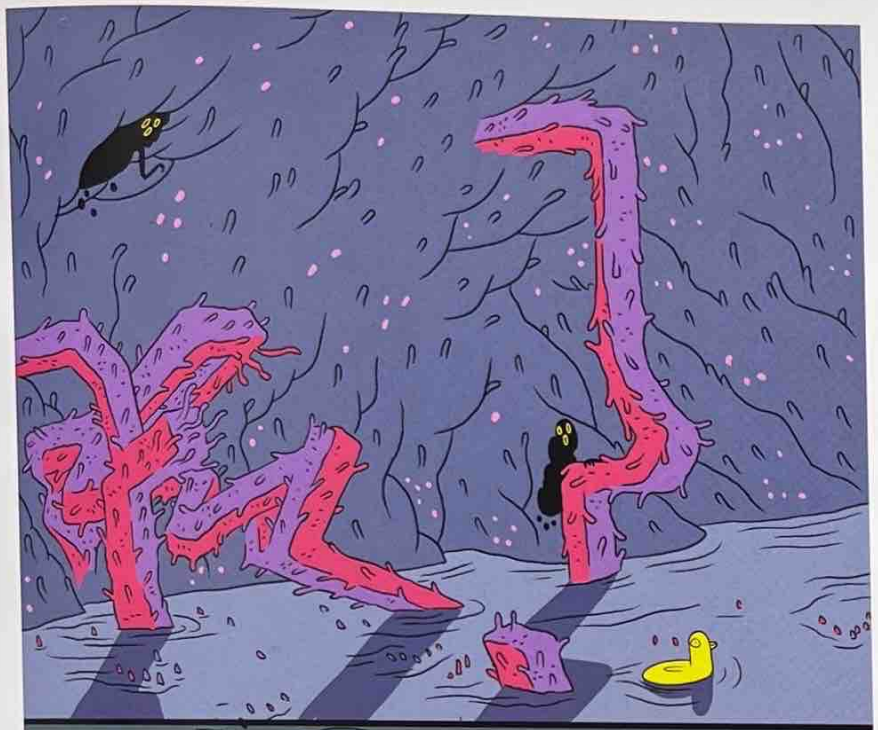

CANDLE WAX DRIPS WHILE IN MOTION
CONSTANTLY IN DANGER OF FALLING OUT OF CANDLE HOLDER
INSIDE DRAWER
URINAL HAS BAGGED LUNCH— FINN AND JAKE CAN ALSO SIT THERE IF THEY'RE STEERING
THIS PART OF RAFT CAN GET SMASHED UP/OFF

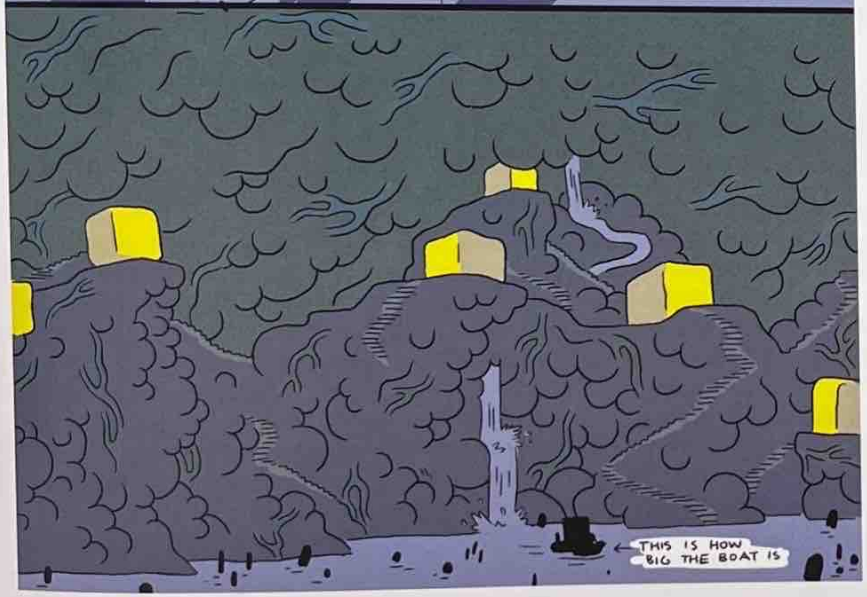

ONE ENTRANCE
THIS IS HOW BIG THE BOAT IS
NARROW CORRIDORS

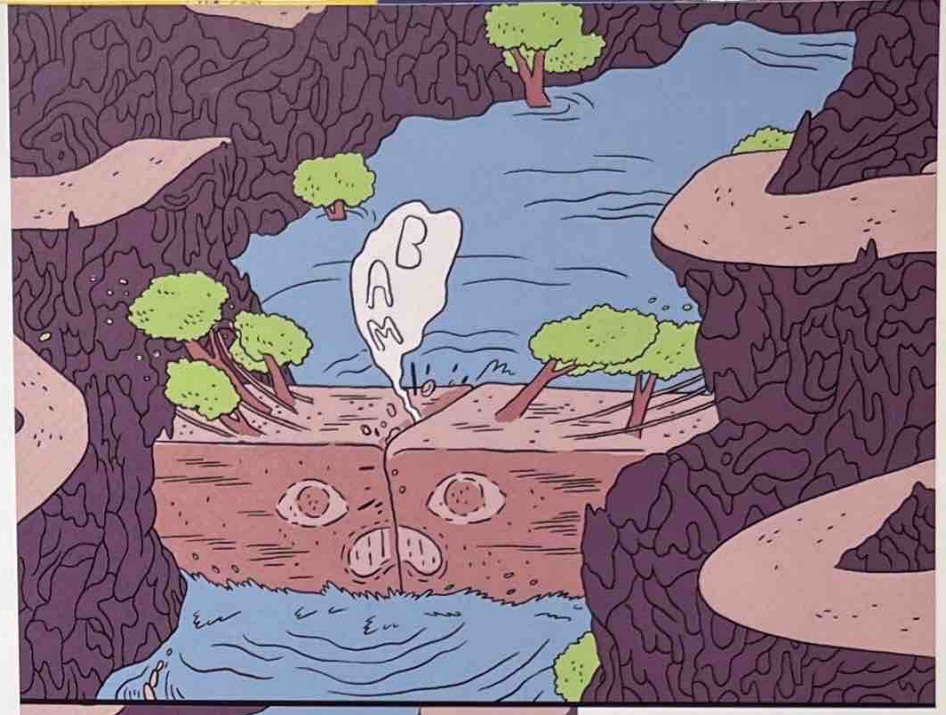
"BEAUTOPIA" CONCEPTS







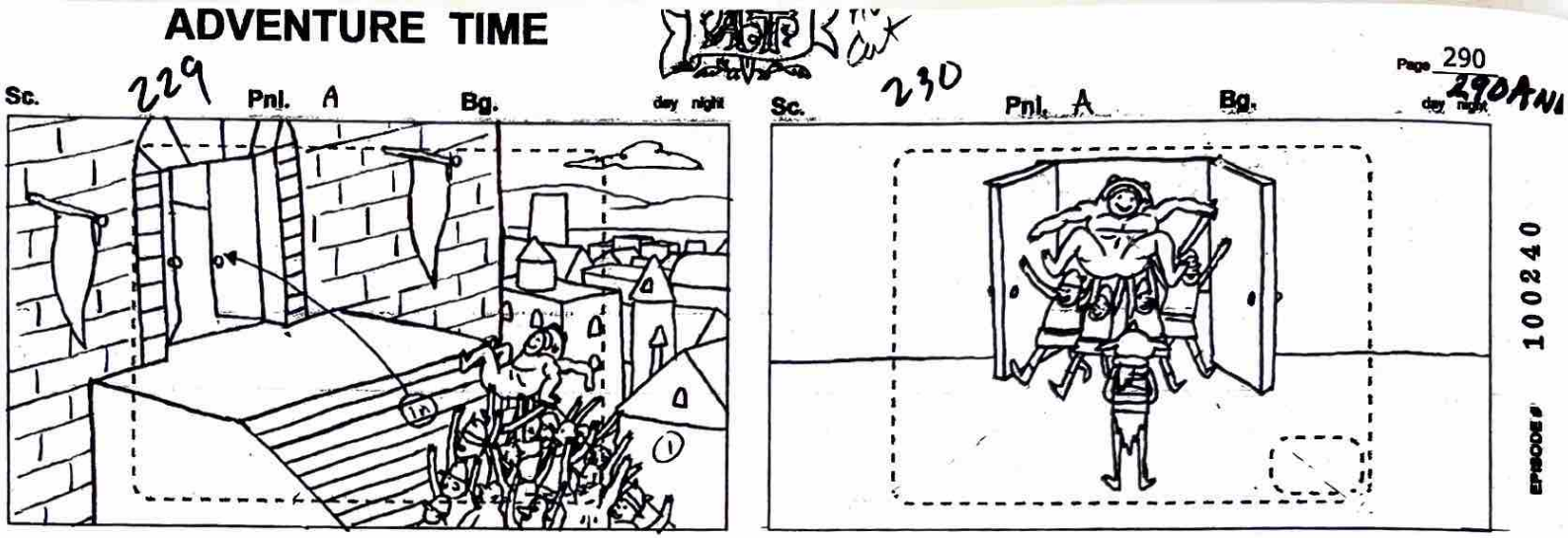








This spread: More work from designer Michael DeForge for the episode "Beautopia."







Above: Storyboard panels from "The Silent King" that include some of the Goblin Kingdom's structures by Jesse Moynihan. Below each panel is the background art designed by Ghostshrimp, which went through a drastic change from generic castle to "looking like a beehive," says Cole Sanchez, who co-boarded the episode. This was an extreme example of changes from board to background.



Left: Design model of Gummy, the Goblin King's assistant, by Phil Rynda.

(Continued from page 209)

Cole Sanchez: I draw my backgrounds how I want them to be finalized, but if the designers see something there that can be pushed further, then I'm totally open to it. I remember in "The Silent King," we drew traditional-looking castle backgrounds in the board, but the finished background art ended up looking like a beehive. A change that large hasn't happened since then, at least on boards that I've done, but elements and touches are still added into the backgrounds, which I enjoy.

Thomas Herpich: I tend to board things out very thoroughly, even in my thumbnails. I feel like the backgrounds and characters are tools that one can use spontaneously in the writing process, and the more fleshed out they are, the more tools you have available. Like, for example—and this is a little oversimplified—if your character has a sword on his belt, maybe he can use that to solve some problem, but if he were just a stick figure, you wouldn't have been able to let that happen. Same for backgrounds—the more props and obstacles you've got sitting around, the more you can integrate your character into his environment. I've got a related pet peeve with seeing, like, a big grassy clearing in the middle of the woods where the characters stop and talk to each other. It feels too "cartoony," for lack of a better word. Too convenient, too fake. I want my forest floors to be all lumpy and covered with roots, with trees poking out in inconvenient places.





[Storyboard artist] Seo Kim: I think I rely a lot on doing subtle visual jokes and drawing weird or funny drawings. So it's kind of necessary for me to be thorough, like Tom said, about designing things and getting down to as much detail as I can . . . though I didn't fully realize this until recently. Until I started working in-house I had no idea how much influence the board artists had and how thorough someone could get with a rough board. And I think that's what's so cool about this show, because it allows people creative freedom and space to be themselves and to do their best work—something I didn't think could exist in a TV cartoon.

The color evolved dramatically from the pilot to series as well.

Pat McHale: Pen likes really bright colors. There's something really appealing about characters that almost look like candy or toys. But . . . my natural sensibilities are a bit more on the subtle side. Pen told Nick and me that he wanted me to make all the color decisions because he didn't trust himself. So I was always going for the subtle colors, but Pen wanted the bright colors. So we would go back and forth, and Nick had to deal with both of us, but finally we found a balance. Eventually Nick knew exactly what notes we were both going to have before we even opened our mouths.

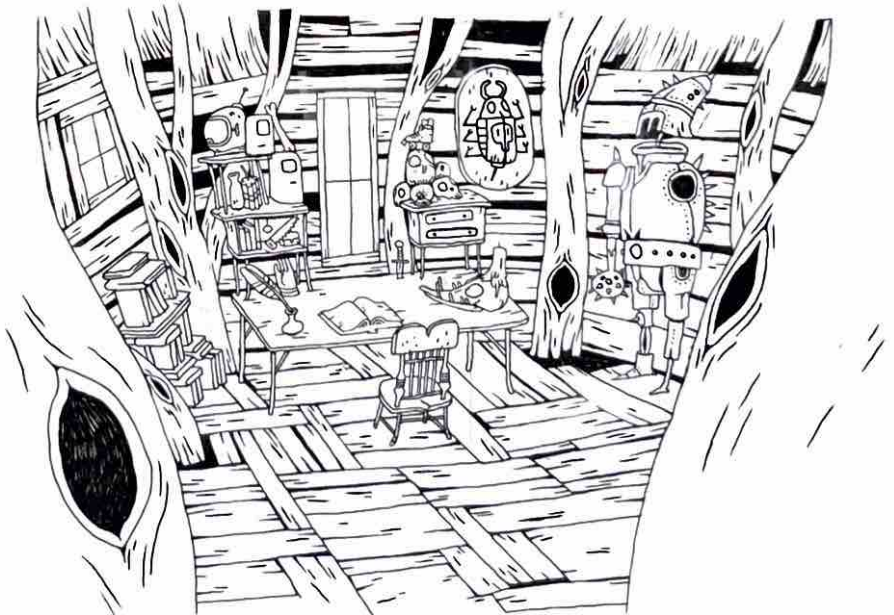
Another thing that was appealing about painting Ghostshrimp's line art, as with color-fill-style backgrounds in general, was that it gave us the opportunity to animate the background elements without having

Above: Backgroud art depicting the Goblin Kingdom, designed by Ghostshrimp.

Right: Design model of Xergiok the Goblin King sitting on two goblins, by Phil Rynda.



TREEFORT DEN



This page: Ghostshrimp's original rough drawings for the tree house den.



them look like a prop in an old episode of *Scooby-Doo*. [Pat refers here to the effect when a prop in the background is evidently going to be animated before it even moves, because it was painted in a flat, cartoon-fill style that contrasts with the painted background.] It meant that the entire world of the show could be interacted with, which sort of subconsciously makes the world feel more real to the audience—even if the interaction is minimal. Finally, everything fit into place!

Andy Ristaino: Phil would always talk about how we wanted the objects that the characters carried or ran into to have a history. And I think this can be applied to every aspect of the show. *Adventure Time* is about a world that has existed long before Finn and Jake did, and one that will exist long after they are gone. The objects, characters, clothes, and buildings all have a history. We really wanted things in the show to have a feeling of history and mystery that the characters who exist in the world take for granted, because that's how things have always been.

Ghostshrimp: The tree house is my favorite thing I did on the show. It took maybe three concept designs before we nailed it. The first two were my tests for the show, I think, along with two Candy Kingdom designs, the second of which was the final one. Pretty amazing when you think about it. They didn't really give me much to work with. I kept asking for more information about the show, and they just kept telling me to do my thing. Adam Muto had done some amazing concept designs, and they had the pilot, of course. The only thing they really had a solid idea of was that the grasslands and the Ice Kingdom had to more or less match the pilot—everything else was pretty much up for grabs, so I just went nuts. At first there was a

Above: Ghostshrimp's revised tree house den concept, cleaned up and colored.

Above: Ghostshrimp's original rough drawings for the kitchen area, with a two-seat bench.

Right: Finn and Jake struggle with a distressed, dying Jiggler, whom they tried to keep as a pet in their tree house.







major question mark about whether I could draw fast enough to keep up with the workload. As an illustrator I usually work on one piece for at least three days, but here I had to be able to do three pieces a day! That really freaked me out, so that whole first set of major designs were drawn in a manic state of anxiety, which is the opposite of how I normally work. I am naturally carefree and happy, and that's where my focus comes from. That was the biggest challenge I've faced during my ten-year career so far. Rather than drawing with pencil and an eraser, I decided to try drawing with a Micron [a technical pen with archival ink] and a Wite-Out pen. That forced me to focus harder on finding the right line on my first try, and it allowed me to draw fast enough to keep the job, but it was pretty close. I definitely can't draw as fast as most of the people who work in the animation industry. During season two things settled down, and I was used to the pace, so I returned to drawing with pencil before inking with the pen. That allowed me to have a lot of fun with it, and I think that's reflected in the show.

An ideal of "fantasy realism" was strived for in every detail, including the size and layout of Finn and Jake's tree house, but in practice, it was just that: an ideal.

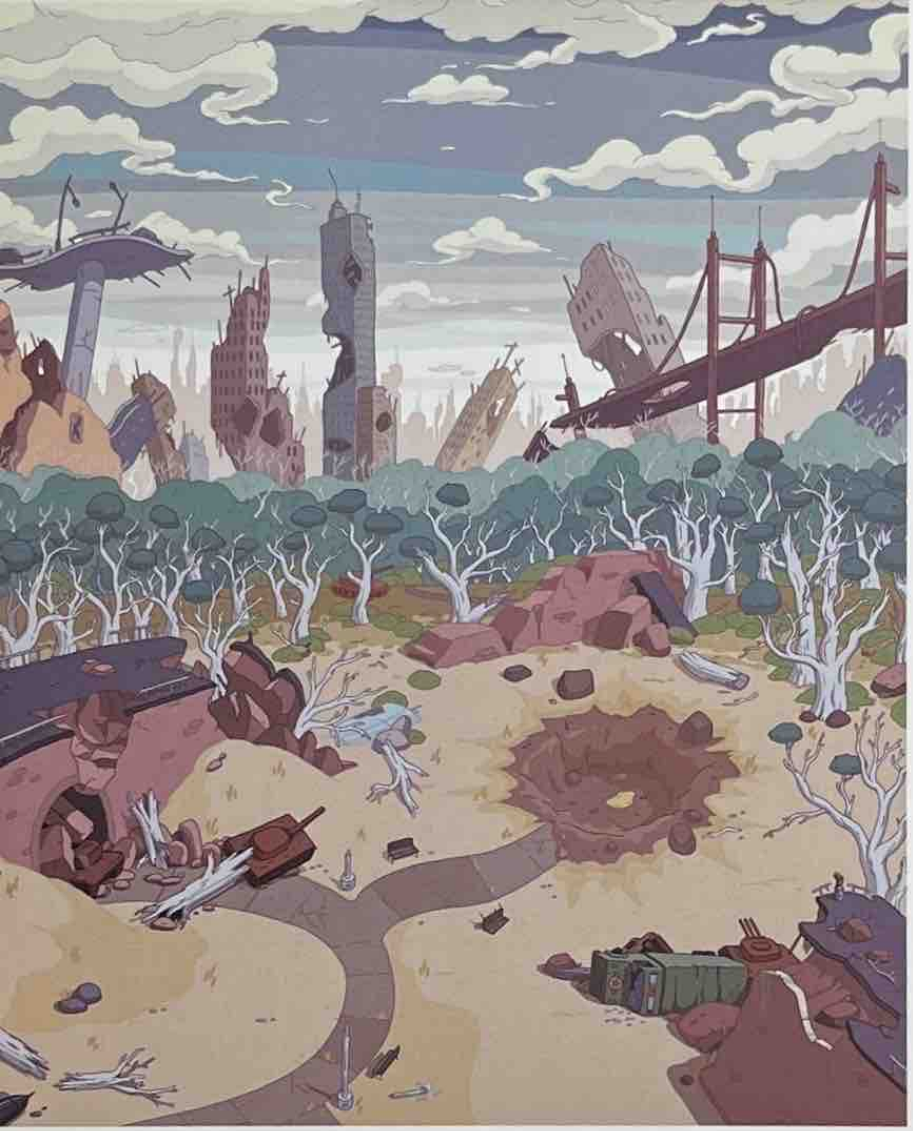
Pen Ward: Pat and I were really serious about limiting the tree house and how big it was. We didn't want to cheat it. I was always bummed when *The Simpsons* would conveniently have an extra room or different stuff in the basement out of nowhere. We wanted Finn and Jake to feel cramped in the tree house. Their kitchen was only so small. We wanted it to be real. And then that changed, immediately, once we started making the show. Right away, we realized it's hard to stage stuff in there; we had to cheat it. You have to. You're coming up with stuff so fast that you can't control it; you can't redo it five times—you can redo it maybe once, but probably not.

Some examples of staging needs requiring the floor plan to be expanded are when the Jiggler explodes into purple bodily fluid and stringy ribbons all over the kitchen, when Crystal Warriors open a portal to kidnap Finn, or when the Ice King moves in and bunks down behind a shower curtain—sometimes there just needs to be more floor space.

The characters and the world of Ooo are intriguing and thoughtfully crafted. But what do they do every day? Where do they go? What do they eat? Whom do they love? Whom do they fight? The creators of *Adventure Time* built themselves a storytelling playground ready for action.



This page: In "The Jiggler," "Crystals Have Power," and "Play Date," among other episodes, the originally planned cramped and cozy tree house interior was stretched as needed to allow the staging of specific scenes.







This page: In "Simon and Marcy," a picture of Ooo 996 years in the past reveals an urban wasteland: a result of the Great Mushroom War's devastation. This episode's backgrounds were designed by Santino Lascano and Derek Hunter; painted by Martin Ansolabehere, Sandra Calleros, and Ron Russell; and color styled by Catherine E. Simmonds.

Santino Lascano on designing destruction: Designing the BGs for "Simon and Marcy" and anything that is connected to this story arc are one of my favorite things to draw for *Adventure Time*. Whenever I got the assignment to design this part of of the world, I would always try to ground it in reality. That means lots of reference pictures of destroyed buildings from World War II, as well as vehicles and weapons that were used. I also tried to draw everyday things I'd see here in L.A. (buildings, freeways, cars) and just destroy them. It's sort of weird and sadistic to destroy the things we see every day, but I believe it has more impact visually when it's something we can all relate to.

Derek Hunter on designing destruction: Growing up in San Francisco Bay Area during the 1989 earthquake meant that I was exposed to terrifying amounts of news coverage and photos of destroyed buildings, cars crushed under collapsed freeway overpasses, and bridges falling apart over the ocean . . . these images are never far from my creative conscious when drawing the destroyed city streets of Ooo. I am truly blessed to have experienced such horror at an impressionable age.

POST-APOCALYPTIC BACKGROUNDS





This page: In "Finn the Human," Finn lives out an alternate lifetime in an alternate-universe scenario as a result of his wish being granted in Prismo's Time Room (right). Jake puts off wishing his own wish in order to hang in the Time Room hot tub with Prismo and the Cosmic Owl. Jake is finally spurred out of the hot tub and into action after witnessing (on Prismo's viewing screen) alternate-world Finn's loss of his sanity and accidental destruction of civilization.

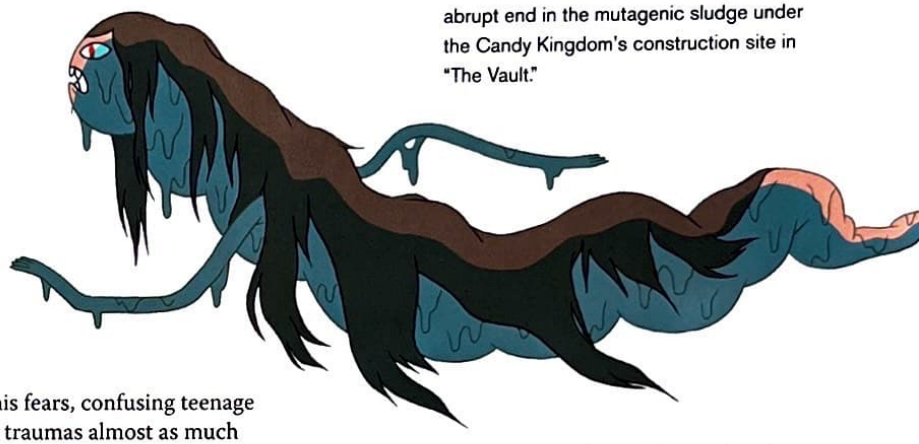





4
DUNGEON
CRAWLING


WANTED
WANTED





Opposite: Finn's past life as Shoko, the one-armed female thief, comes to an abrupt end in the mutagenic sludge under the Candy Kingdom's construction site in "The Vault."

Above left: The *Enchiridion*, the hero's handbook, which contains both tips on how to smooch princesses and the power to tear open a dimensional wormhole to the Time Room.

Above right: A design model of the mutated Shoko.

Background designer Derek Hunter on the Candy Kingdom construction as seen in "The Vault": I figured the bulk of the Candy Kingdom itself is made from blocks of cake covered in brightly colored fondant, so being able to draw its construction was fun. As for the construction site itself, I figured a lot of the sugar and flour and candy bits were mined from the surrounding area itself and instead of concrete bags being strewn about all over, obviously the candy kingdom's citizens would use bags of sugar to create the frosting bonding agent, right? Of course they would.

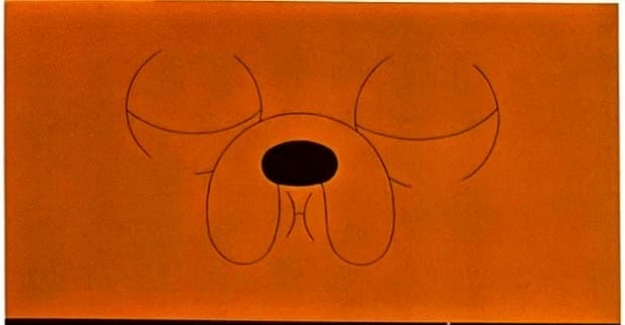
The *Enchiridion* is the hero's handbook, meant only for heroes whose hearts are righteous. "Do you think I've got the goods, Bubblegum, because I am *into this stuff*!" Finn asks Princess Bubblegum immediately before jumping and plummeting out of her tower window with abandon, knowing that his pal Jake will save him at the last moment with his stretchy powers. Finn's mission: to go seek the book at the top of Mount Cragdor, where it is guarded by Mannish Man the Minotaur. "The Enchiridion!" is also the title of this season one episode that was developed as the "kitchen sink" prototype used to greenlight the show in the first place. It has all the elements of the pilot short, with additional layers that the crew was planning for the series.

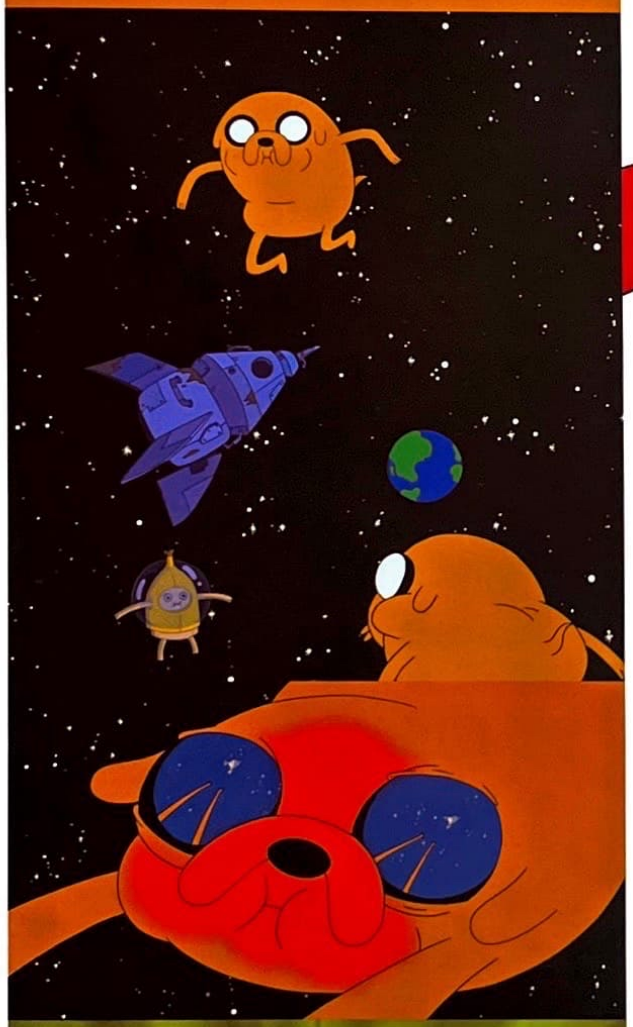
In "The Enchiridion!," Finn's heroic, righteous will is tested again and again. Most unsettling for Finn is when his crystal-clear moral code is tried by situations that are morally ambiguous. After Finn rescues some winged gnomes crying for help from a fire pit, they pay Finn back by zapping old ladies until Jake sticks them back into the fire. Finn's black-and-white view of the world is confused. "I'm not righteous . . . I'm *wrong*teous!" he laments. Even though the old ladies who got zapped were (apparently) fake, navigating moral gray areas is a recurring theme in the show. Again and again, Finn wrestles with his reasoning and reasons for action.

Attacking nasty stuff with a demon-blood broadsword is a straightforward proposition for a hero like Finn. But not when the nasty stuff is in his head . . . or guts. Finn has to deal with his fears, confusing teenage feelings, and buried psychic traumas almost as much as he has to battle actual monsters. In "The Vault," Finn plays a regression simulator game on BMO, the sentient game console, as part of Jake's attempt to get him to understand his strange dreams. Finn witnesses one of his previous lives as Shoko, the one-armed female thief who ultimately falls into the mutagenic sludge river that runs under the Candy Kingdom and dies as a grotesque slug-person on the very spot that Finn and Jake's tree house would grow. As Finn says, "Oh, yeah, the Vault. That's where the stuff I can't handle goes. Kerplunk!"

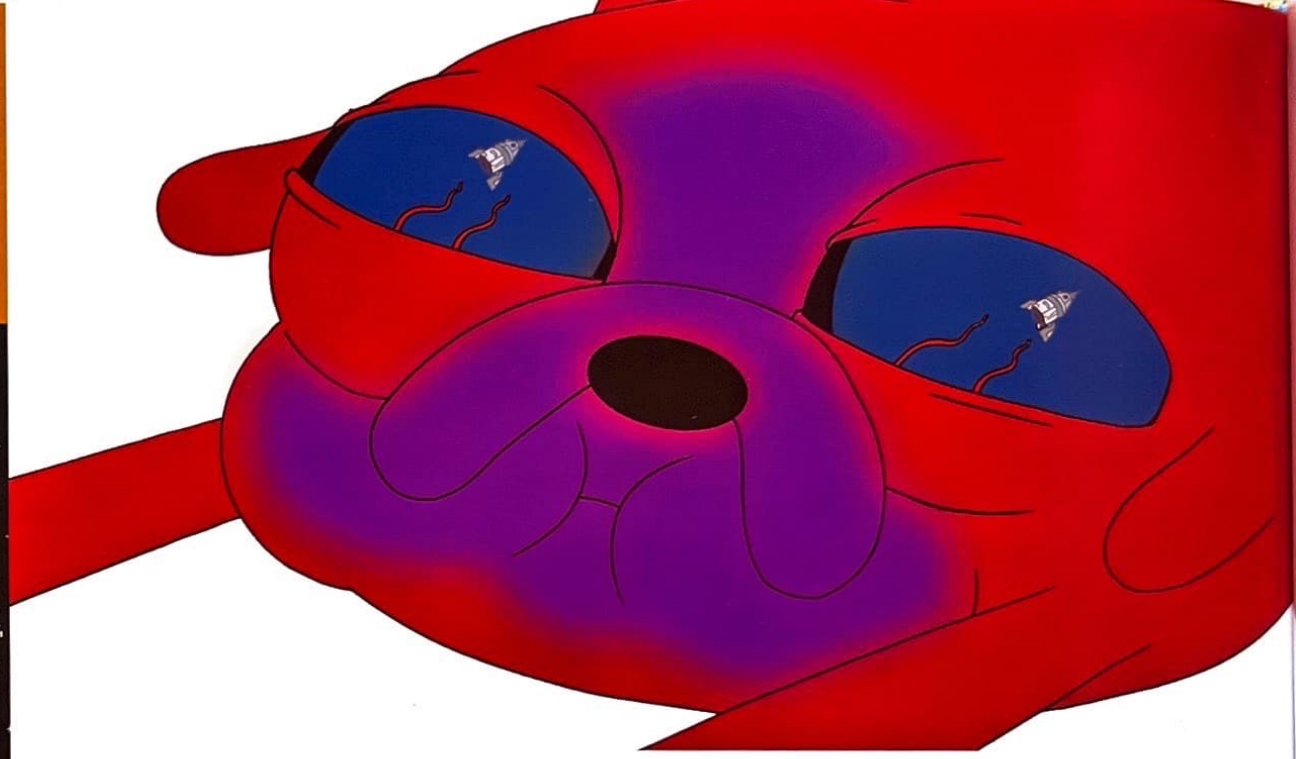
Beyond Finn's "Vault," the stories told in *Adventure Time* charge fearlessly in all sorts of mature, mind-expanding directions—toward death, for one. After Jake's "croak dream" in "The New Frontier," Jake grows to accept his nearing death cheerfully as signs from his prophetic vision keep appearing and Finn gets more distressed about losing his best friend. "Finn, when I die, my individual Earth consciousness is gonna go all over everywhere while Glob tallies my deeds . . . I'm gonna be all around you! In your nose . . . and in your dreams and socks! I'll be part of you in your Earth mind! It's gonna be great!" "Dude! Stop . . . saying . . . all this crazy . . . nonsense. It's making me messed up. I'm thirteen. You're messin' me up."

The writers and artists try to write honest meditations about spiritual, magical, and mystical themes into episodes while keeping it funny and light enough to balance the heaviness.







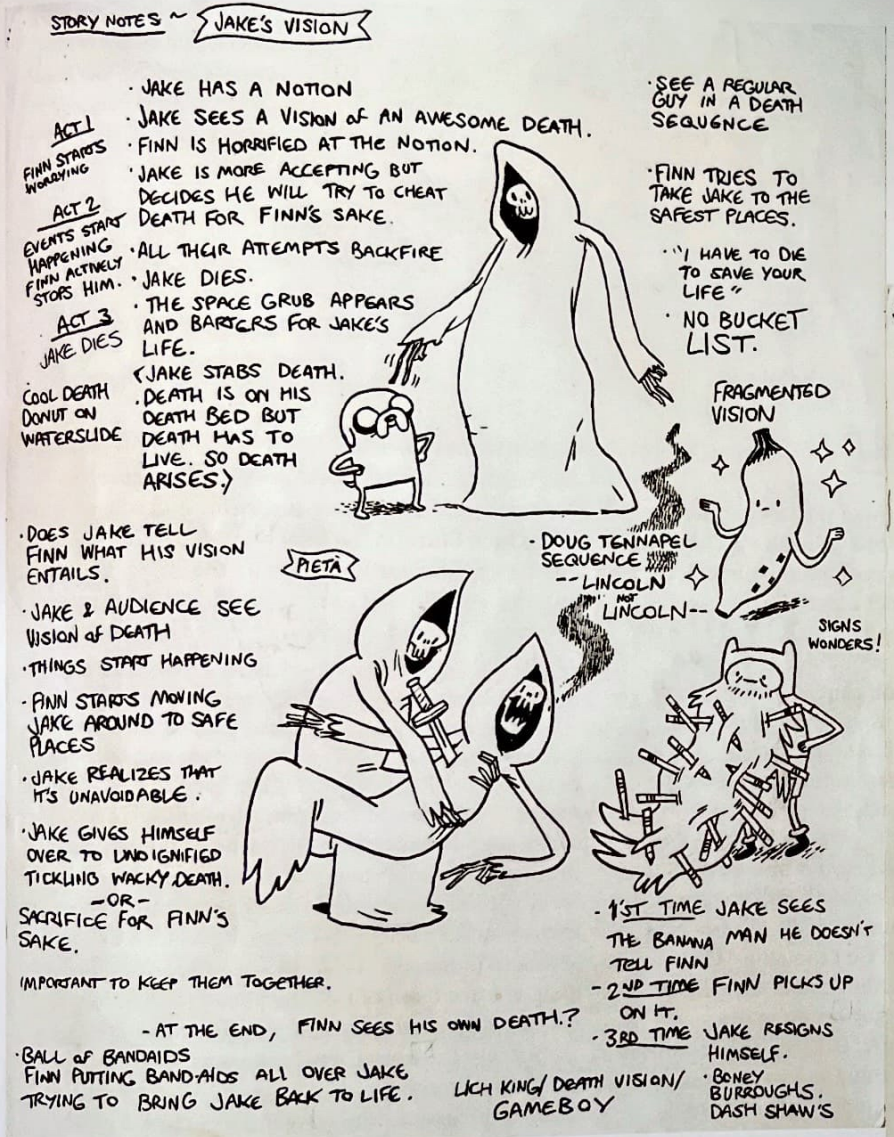


Jesse Moynihan: It's fun to drop cosmic bombs on kids and to make it feel as real and legit as possible. I'm pretty sure kids like to get their minds blown. They want to engage forces that are infinitely bigger than themselves. At least that's how I felt as a kid, and how I still feel. You can address the heaviest questions and use them in the context of adventuring and humor. The weight of those questions serves to deepen the enjoyment of adventure. If you nail the right proportions of fear, mystery, action, and humor, then you've got a gem of entertainment, I think. It also helps to have an opinion on all this stuff while you're writing it.

I can always detect a phony when they write generic stuff like "Use your heart." What does that mean? Use your heart. It doesn't mean anything by itself. Using your heart has to apply to the character's specific personal experience, or to a specific idea about where "the heart" comes from in relation to the birth of the universe. Then "Use your heart" means something.

Thomas Herpich: Part of how I keep myself challenged and excited after all these years is to try to orchestrate a really heavy, serious premise to work from, and then (hopefully) make it funny. It's harder than working from a light, silly premise, but easy can be boring. Plus, when you really nail it, and somehow make a heavy thing simultaneously light and funny, those are always the best episodes.

Jack Pendarvis: There's a reason kids have always wanted to hear about the witch who's going to trap kids in the gingerbread house and eat them, and about the poor woodcutter who abandons his kids in the forest, and that thing in the bed that looks *sort of* like your grandmother, but what big teeth it has . . . In his famous book on the subject, [psychologist] Bruno Bettelheim suggests that fairy tales, which contain lots of monsters and loss and death and abandonment, secretly teach kids how to deal with the stuff that scares them anyway. I mean, the stories don't create the fear; the stories address the fear. I don't know if that's true or not. Ask Bruno Bettelheim! I think he's dead, but ask him anyway.

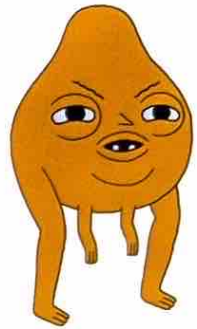


Opposite: Images from Jake's "croak dream" as seen in "The New Frontier" and a special-pose design model of Jake suffocating in deep space during that dream.

This page: Heavy themes were built into the show from the very beginning. These two pages of story notes from Adam Muto were created in late 2008 or 2009 during early production on season one. Some of the ideas here were adapted into the episode "The New Frontier" in season three.









This page: Lemonjon and other lemon mutant model designs from "All Your Fault." Lemon mutants designed by Jesse Jacobs.



The outline is the initial form of the story that eventually becomes an episode. Head writer Kent Osborne, Pen, and additional writers create these three-act story synopses, with each act described in a single paragraph. Each outline has a narrative arc and basic structure: In the first act, a problem is presented to Finn and Jake that is significant and must be addressed. The second act is where they figure out how to solve the problem, but an escalating twist confounds them until the resolution is achieved by further efforts in the third act.

Jack Pendarvis: One of the first outlines I wrote up, I included a good bit of dialogue. I think it was Pen who made an offhand comment in the next meeting, "I really liked that dialogue." So I thought, "Aha!" And I crammed my next outline full of the talkiest, meatiest dialogue I could imagine. So in the meeting after that, Pen said to me, "Uh, we don't usually include dialogue." I was learning as I went along. Some storyboard artists like a dialogue prompt, just a nudge or two, more than others. Or occasionally in a meeting somebody says something that Pen really likes, so he'll request, "Put that in quotation marks." The outlines are just a starting place, anyway. They're skeletons—well crafted, nicely formed skeletons. The structure is solid and sound. I usually say it's like writing sonnets. They have to be that strict and capable of variety within the form. We try to give the storyboard and writing teams the best possible foundation so they can build something surprising and wild on top of it. Once I turn in the final revised outline, I don't see the episode until it comes on the air, roughly nine months later. So that's pretty exciting. I see it with everyone else, and I'm always amazed and delighted by how it's grown.



Being a "board-driven" show, the specific moment-to-moment actions and dialogue of *Adventure Time* episodes are written and drawn during the storyboarding process by the storyboard artists (in contrast with most animated television shows, which are written entirely in script form before being handed to board artists to illustrate). Typically, an episode outline is assigned to a team of two storyboard artists, ideally based on the team's style, strengths, and interests.

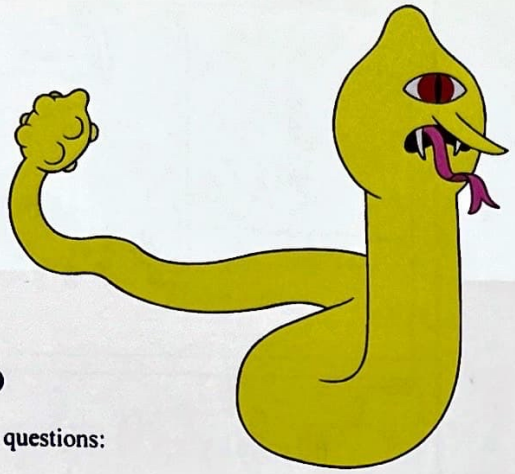
Because the board artists almost always work in pairs, compromise and collaboration are essential. Only on rare occasions have artists boarded episodes solo. The process starts with deciding how the outline is to be divided.

Jesse Moynihan: In my experience, you try to be generous but also slyly imply which sections you are most excited to work on. Hopefully everyone wins and gets to board a section that plays to their strengths.

(Continued on page 245)

Right: Lemon mutant designed by Jon Vermilyea.

Below right: Lemon mutant designed by Jesse Jacobs.



Basic Story Structure:

ACT I – Setup (1/4 of episode)

The first act should answer two questions:

1) Who is the episode about. Finn or Jake (or someone else?)
2) What happens to their life that has to be resolved.

At the end of the act I comes the first major plot point:

PLOT POINT I
A plot point is a major turn, that creates the direction for the rest of the episode. Now the main character knows their purpose. They have a clear goal of what they have to do, and something at stake if they don't attain their goal. Something that feels like its life or death for the main character. Even if is about something really stupid. We have to wholeheartedly believe that this is life or death to them. You have the first act to set this up, so that when you hit the first plot point, you don't have to do a lot of explaining.

ACT II – Confrontation (1/2 of episode)

At the end of act I the main character knows what they have to do. In Act II, we watch them doing it. Same goal throughout that they are struggling towards as they meet obstacles along their way.

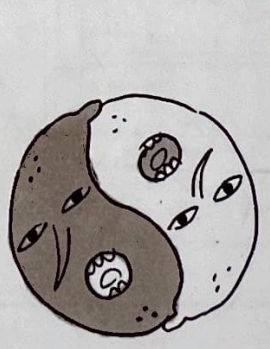
PLOT POINT II
At the end of act two comes the second plot point. Now the character has been moving toward (and /or away from) their goal for the last 7-8 minutes and its usually by now that their goal is in sight. They know what they have to do. It usually comes right after a bunch of bad-[redacted] happens in the second act, and we think that all is lost. Then something sparks a new idea, the main character finally knows what they have to do, and their efforts have to be re-doubled.

ACT III – Resolution 1/4 of episode)
If you set up your acts one and two correctly, you should be able to have a lot of fun with act three. You get to pay everything off in a fun way and leave the audience feeling good about what happened. Not necessarily in the same way they thought it would happen … Yay! THE END

Princess Bubblegum sends Finn and Jake to investigate a message of distress from the Earl of Lemongrab. He claims to be out of food (candy), but Bubblegum says this is impossible, since she left him with a lifetime supply.

They travel to Lemongrab castle where they learn that the Earl has learned the secret of creating candy life. Unable to resist the urge to procreate, he's created a horde of freakish miniature versions of himself. One has two heads and wings, one has a snake body, etc. They're like wild animals; running around shrieking. Then the earl brings them to a room containing his greatest creation, Lemonjon. He opens the door and reveals a wall with a giant lemongrab face on it: "Yo whaddup". They converse a little. He's smarter than the other freaks, but still super weird. With the mystery solved, Finn and Jake get ready to leave, but Lemongrab tells them to wait up, that he's going to the Candy Kingdom too. He's bringing his army there to pillage all of the candy. When F+J freak out, Lemongrab is genuinely surprised. It seemed like a rational move to him. Threatened with the dungeon, he immediately gives up. But the lemon freaks can't be reasoned with, they're hungry and need candy. F+J easily ball them all up and throw them out the window.

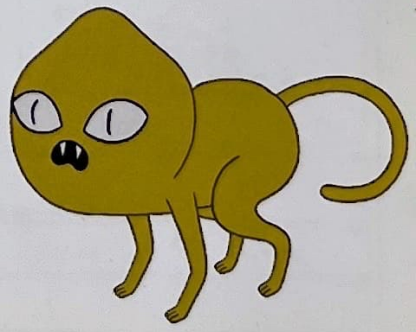
But they forgot about the Lemonjon. Lemongrab reveals that Lemonjon's actually the size of the entire castle, and his internal organs are in various rooms within the castle. F+J run through the various rooms looking for the heart to smash it. They find lots of weird giant organs. J: "I found the barfal ganglia". While this is going on, LJ stands up and starts walking toward the candy kingdom, wearing the castle like clothes "I EXPECT TO EAT ALL OF THE CANDY" he says. When they get to the heart they see, oddly, that it's not beating. F: "That's weird", J: "Just smash it". F kicks the heart, but in doing so restarts it beating. This awakens LJ's conscience, and he converts himself into a million little lemon candies for the lemon freaks to eat. F+J take Lemongrab back to live in the candy kingdom.





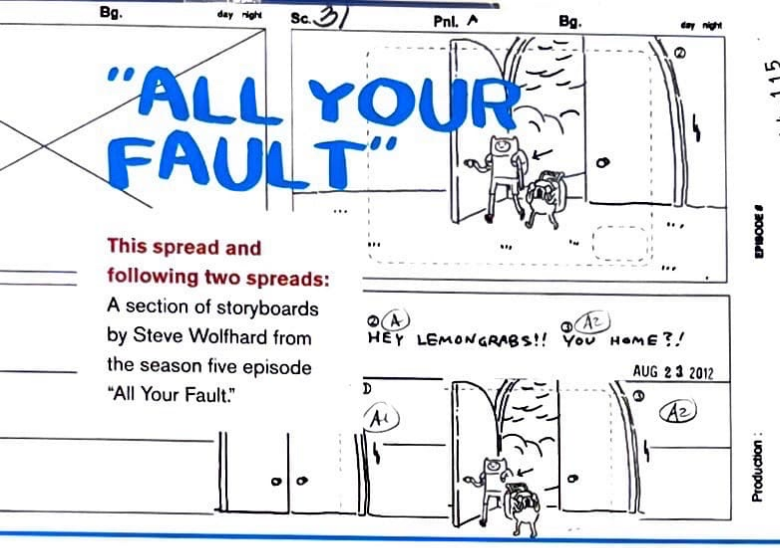
Left: The "Basic Story Structure" guide for the *Adventure Time* crew details the three-act outline form on which episodes are generally based.

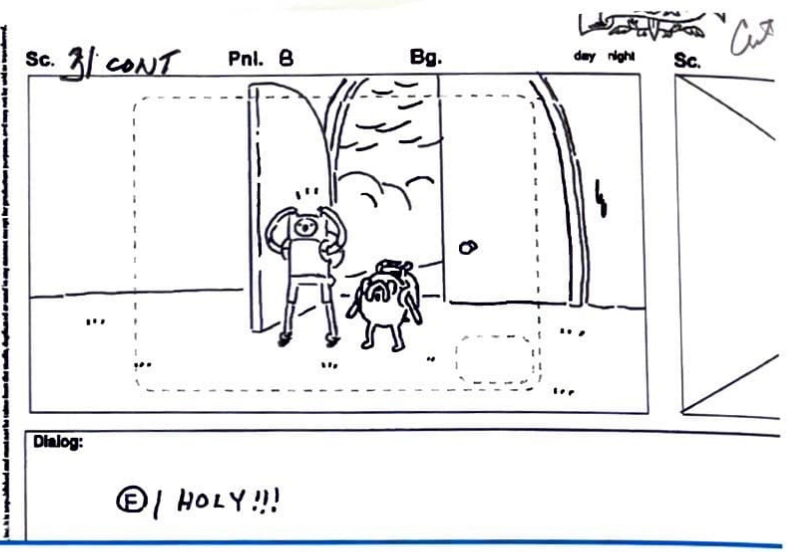
Above: Early story outline for "All Your Fault" by Thomas Herpich.

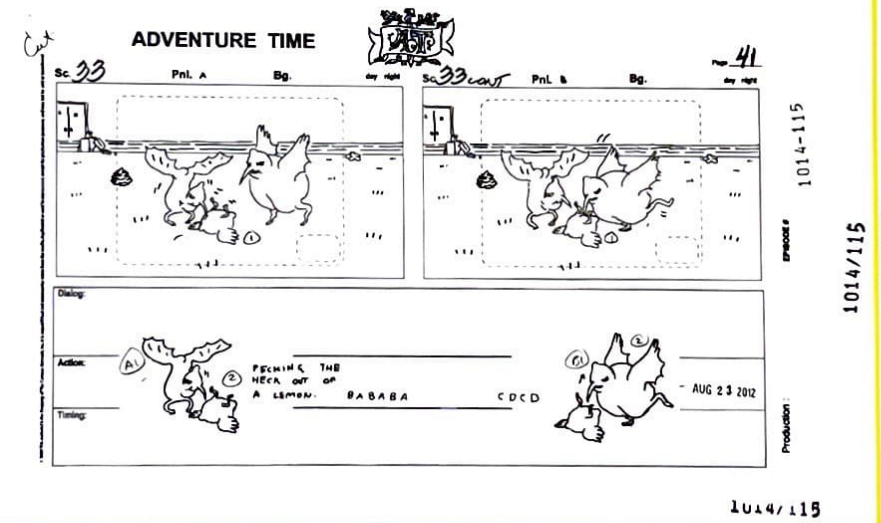


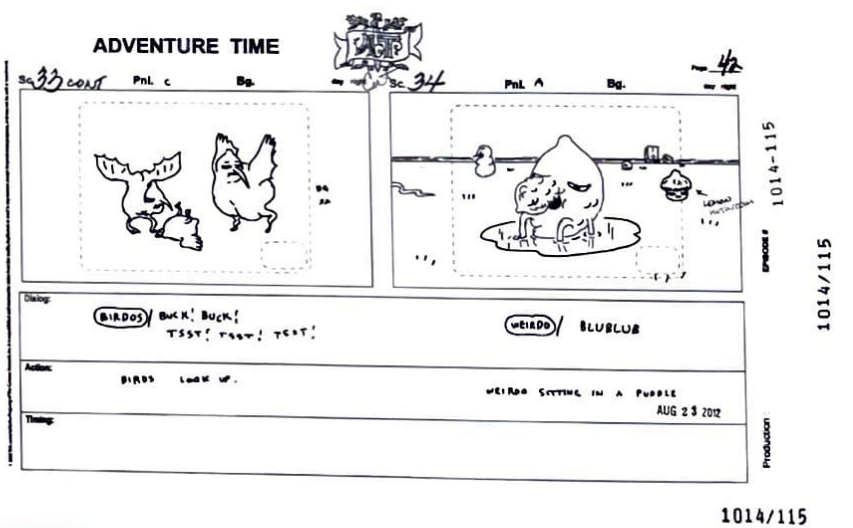
"ALL YOUR FAULT"

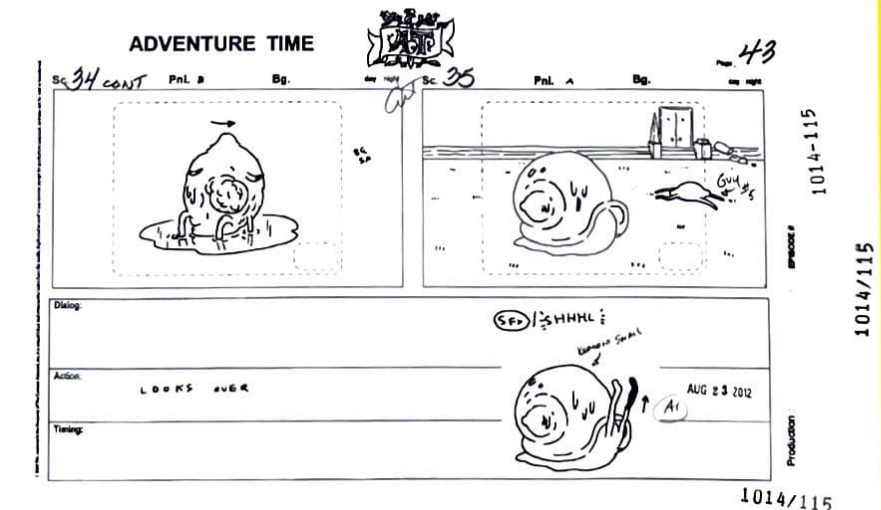
This spread and following two spreads:
A section of storyboards by Steve Wolfhard from the season five episode "All Your Fault."

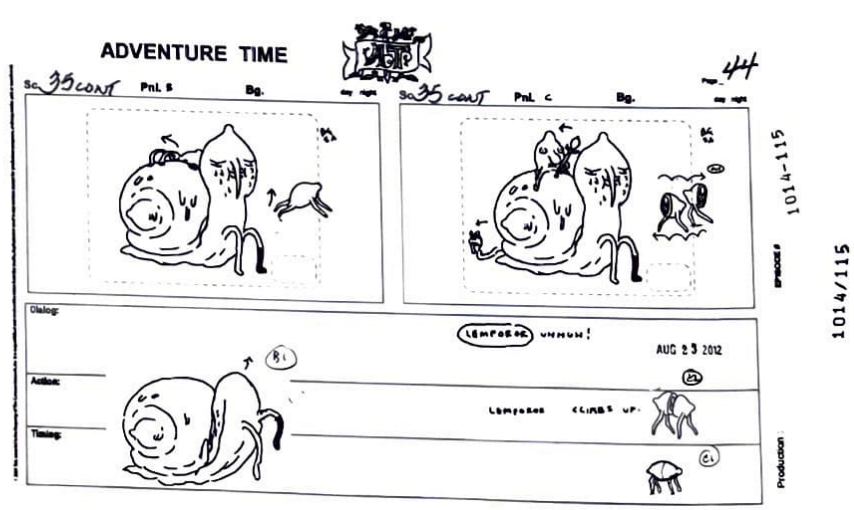












ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 35 CONT Pnl. D Bg. day night

Sc. 36 Pnl. A Bg. day night page 45

Dialog: LEMONSNAKE/ THBLTLTBT.
LEMPORO/ HOOP! HOOP!
LEMON SNAIL/ SELSSLS
(LM6) (F)/ JAKE JAKE JAKE JAKE
(J)/ OH NO,

Action: START "WALKING" OFF SCREEN

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

A1 A2

1014/115

1014-115 EPISODE #

Production:

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. Pnl. Bg. day night

Sc. 36 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night page 46

Dialog: (F)/ JAKEJAKEJAKEJAKE AAAH!
(J) OH GROSS NO!
(LOTS OF WEIRD ANIMAL NOISE

Action: SWARMED, LIKE IN A PETTING ZOO MUTANTS CREEPIN' ON THEM

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

B1

1014/115

1014-115 EPISODE #

Production:

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 36 CONT Pnl. C Bg. day night

Sc.

Dialog:

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 38 Pnl. A Bg. LEMON BIRD day night

Sc. 38 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night page 48

Dialog: (J) AAH!

Action: BIRDS LANDS ON JAKES PACK.

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014/115

1014-115 EPISODE #

Production:

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 39 Pnl. A Bg. DOOR day night

Sc. 39 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night page 49

Dialog: LEMANT/ MEMEMEME!
(J)/ KISS IT!

Action:

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014/115

1014-115 EPISODE #

Production:

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 40 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 40 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night page 50

Dialog: (F)/ AAAH!
lemon crowd/ Candy! H-hungry! Food! Hungry! Food! Hungry! Hungry!

Action:

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014/115

1014-115 EPISODE #

Production:

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 40 CONT Pnl. C Bg. day night

Sc. 41 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Dialog: (F)! SORRY DUDES,

Action: BACKING UP

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014/115

1014-115

EPISODE #

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 41 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Sc. 41 CONT Pnl. C Bg. day night

Dialog: (F)! -WE GOT NO FOOD. (F)! NO. FOOD.

Action: 3 LOOKS PENNED IN.

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014-115

EPISODE #

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 42 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 43 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Dialog:

Action: LEMON LAMB BITES FINN'S HAND.

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014-115

EPISODE #

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 43 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 43 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Dialog: (F) HEY! (F) UH!

Action:

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014-115

EPISODE #

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

no scs. 45-46

Sc. 44 UNDO Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 44 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Dialog: LEMON LAMB! UHUHUHUHUH-

Action: (SAYING "UNACCEPTABLE" LIKE A SHEEP)

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014-115

EPISODE #

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 47 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 48 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Dialog: (F)! HEY! LEMON LAMB! BLECHBLECHBL SFX! THAP! THAP! THAP! THAP! (F)! WEIRDOS!

Action: RAISES ARM.

Timing:

AUG 23 2012

1014-115

EPISODE #

Production:

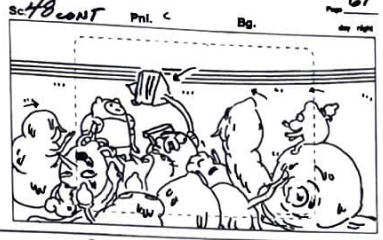
1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 48 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night



Sc. 48 CONT Pnl. C Bg. day night



Page 61

Dialog: ① GET THE BIRTHDAY CAKE

② HEE-

Action: HAND TURNS INTO A CAKE
[ALL CREEPS LOOK UP.]

WINDS UP,
[CREEPS FOLLOW THE CAKE]

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

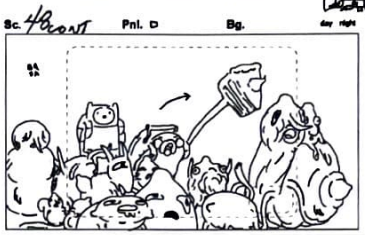
Episode # 1014-115

Production: 1014/115

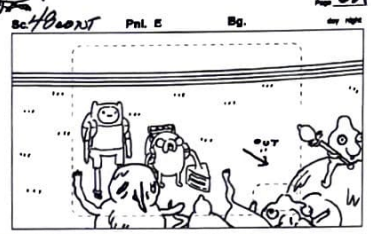
1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 48 CONT Pnl. D Bg. day night



Sc. 48 CONT Pnl. E Bg. day night



Page 62

Dialog: ① - YUP

Action: [FAKE OUT!] ALL CREEPS RUN O.S.

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

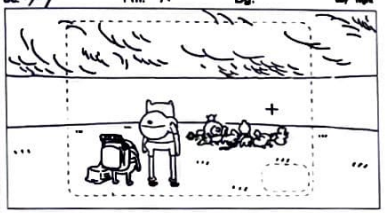
Episode # 1014-115

Production: 1014/115

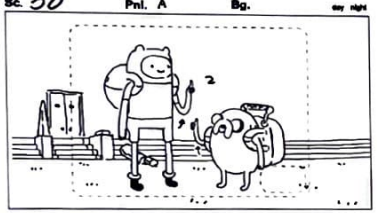
1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 49 Pnl. A Bg. day night



Sc. 50 Pnl. A Bg. day night



Page 63

Dialog:

Action: S1A (A) A1 S1A (A) A1

Timing: (CAKE RETRACTS) (MUTANTS RUN OFF)

AUG 23 2012

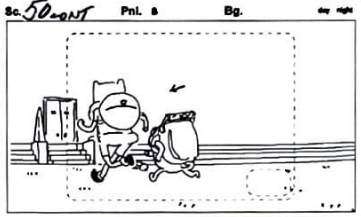
Episode # 1014-115

Production: 1014/115

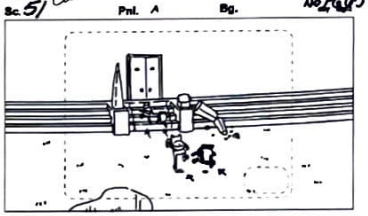
1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 50 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night



Sc. 51 Pnl. A Bg. day night



Page 64 NO PAGES

Dialog:

Action:

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

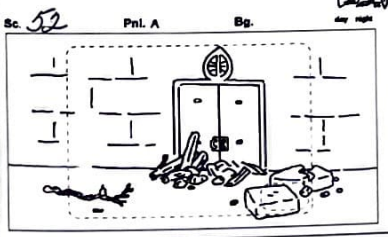
Episode # 1014-115

Production: 1014/115

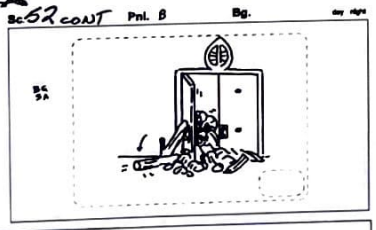
1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 52 Pnl. A Bg. day night



Sc. 52 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night



Page 66

Dialog: ③+J/ UHH

Action: SHOVING AGAINST THE RUBBLE.

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

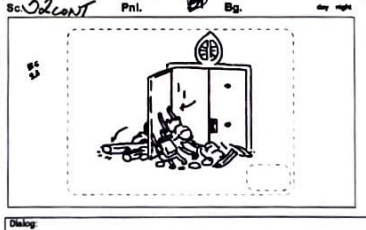
Episode # 1014-115

Production: 1014/115

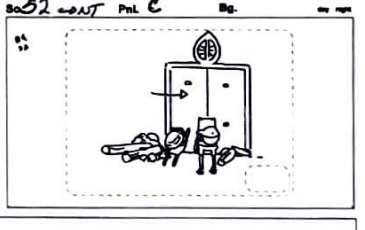
1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 52 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night



Sc. 52 CONT Pnl. C Bg. day night



Page 67

Dialog: ③+J/ UHN!

Action: JAKE CLOSES DOOR. AUG 23 2012

Timing:

Episode # 1014-115

Production: 1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 52 CONT Pnl. D Bg. day night

Sc. 52 CONT Pnl. E Bg. day night

Page 68

1014-115

Episode #

Dialog:

Action: JAKE GRABS RUBBLES

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 52 CONT Pnl. F Bg. day night

Sc. 53 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Page 69

Hu Cut

1014-115

Episode #

Dialog:

L.J. (os)/ Are you lemon?

F&J/ Wow...

②/What the thing is up with this guy?

Action: OVS, REACT F&J

A1

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Hu Cut

Sc. 54 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 55 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Page 70

Hu Cut

1014-115

Episode #

Dialog:

L.J. A1 Does your head come to a nub?

③/WHAT?

Action: A1

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Hu Cut

Sc. 56 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 56 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Page 71

Hu Cut

1014-115

Episode #

Dialog:

③/ You are-

LJ/ UN-Lemon!

Action: NOTE: THIS IS L.G.'S THRONE ROOM, WITH WINDOWS BRICKED UP.

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

no scs. 58-59

Sc. Pnl. Bg. day night

Page 72

Hu Cut

Sc. 57 Pnl. A Bg. day night

1014-115

Episode #

Dialog:

P/ A1 YEAH... COOL MAN, hey d'you know wh- A

Action:

A1 AUG 23 2012

Timing:

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

1014/115

ADVENTURE TIME

Hu Cut

Sc. 60 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 60 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Page 74

Hu Cut

1014-115

Episode #

Dialog:

LJ/ I am-

③/ LEMONJON.

Action:

AUG 23 2012

Timing:

Production:

1014/115

1014/115

1014/115





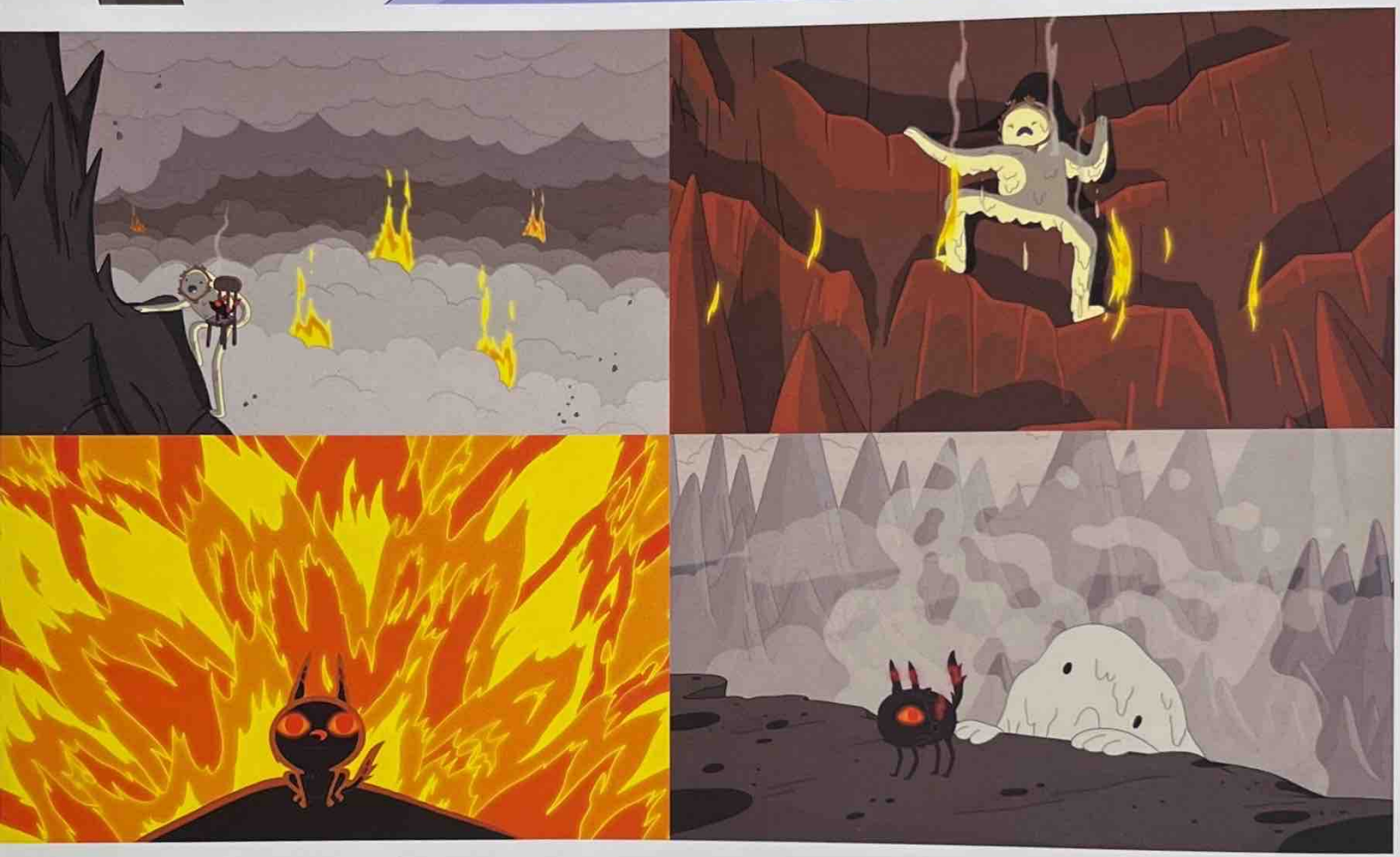












Above: Pan background from the episode Thomas Herpich solo storyboarded, "Thank You."

Left: After the Snow Golem befriends and cares for a lost Fire Wolf pup, he attempts to reunite him with the pack.



(Continued from page 236)

Jesse Moynihan (continued): I know I would try to pass off sections to Ako [Castuera] if the scene had a lot of natural movement (water, landslides, collapsing rocks, etc.) because she has a better grasp of moving huge chunks of elements in a way that's cool to look at. In "Billy's Bucket List," I was really glad she got the section where Finn swims out into the ocean. That sequence is something I would never be able to visualize so artfully.

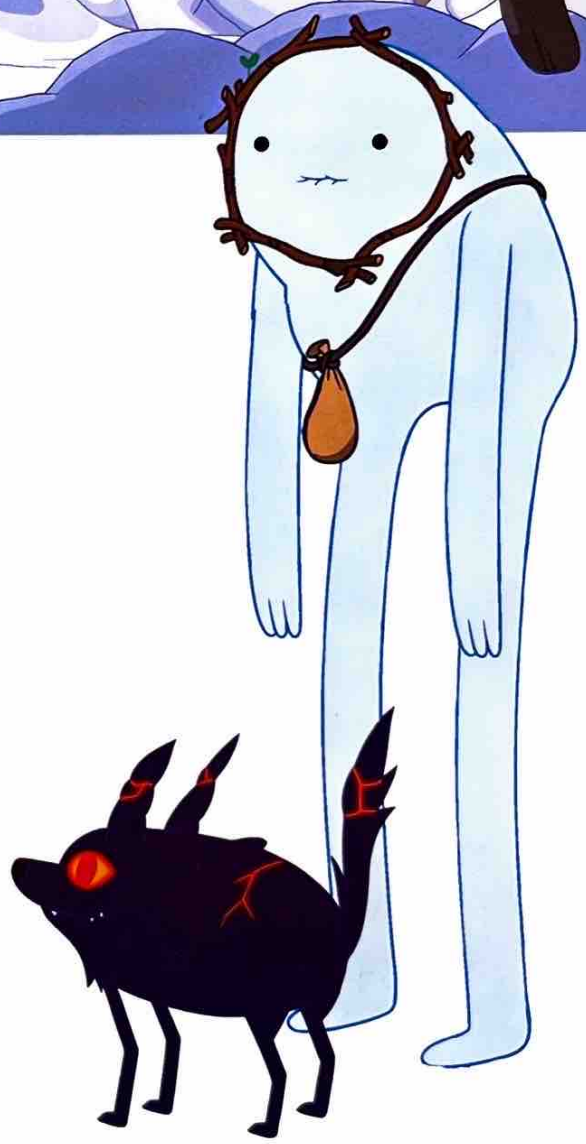
I've only done one solo board, and it felt like coming home. You have complete architectural control. You don't have to run anything by anyone. If you get an idea, you just go with it, and there is a completeness of thought that's hard to get with a collaborative board. I don't know how healthy it is to do too many solo boards, but it appeals to the most possessive traits of an artist, for sure.

Thomas Herpich: I've also done one solo board, and I agree with Jesse—it felt great, and part of me is always longing for that kind of control, but it also made me a basket case while I was working on it. Compromise is good for the soul.

Cole Sanchez: I feel like if you're reading the outline and you get a strong feeling about how a scene should go, then you should do it, and you should be okay with letting your partner take something that they feel strongly about. Once we talk to each other about which scenes we like, we divide the board up by having one person take the first and third acts and the other the second. So, if the majority of what you like is in the second act, then that is what you'll work on. It's an even split of labor, and it allows you to focus on a section of the board without breaking it up too much.

The board artists produce thumbnail storyboards, which are the first complete drafts of an episode. These are roughly drawn, four panels to a sheet, and generally on small Post-it notes that are easy to swap out with redrawn panels when needed. When complete, they pitch the board to the creative and supervising directors and other crew members by reading the dialogue and camera directions aloud while directing attention to each panel sequentially.

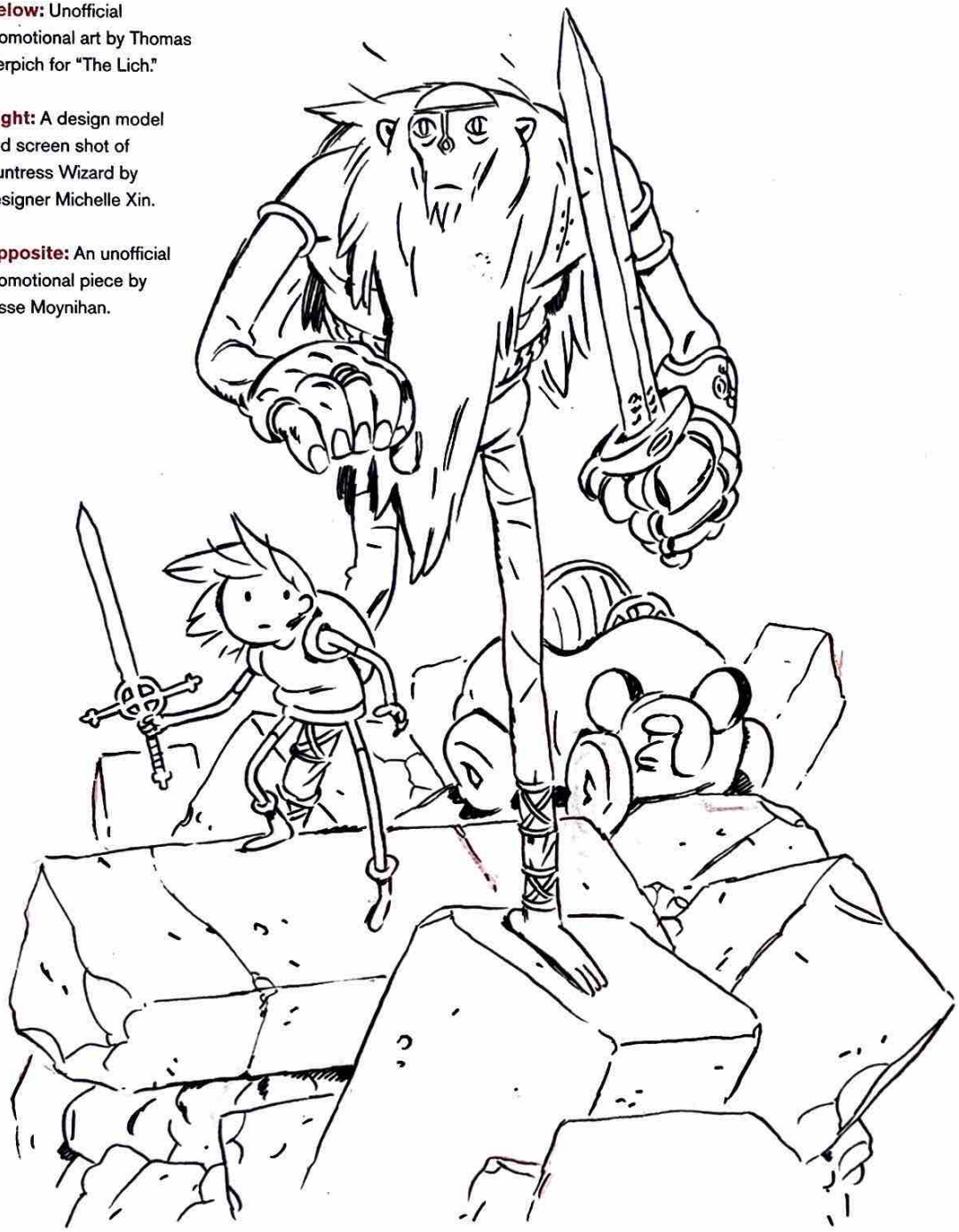
The storyboard artists receive notes and revisions, and then they typically rework and pitch the boards again before gaining approval to proceed to the "cleanup" stage. The cleaned-up boards are simply larger, clearer versions of the approved thumbnail boards. The *Adventure Time* crew has used a combination of traditional and digital tools for this process.



Below: Unofficial promotional art by Thomas Herpich for "The Lich."

Right: A design model and screen shot of Huntress Wizard by designer Michelle Xin.

Opposite: An unofficial promotional piece by Jesse Moynihan.





Thomas Herpich: Most of the boarders, throughout the life of the show, have worked only on paper. I think for seasons two, three, and four, there wasn't anybody working digitally at all. Now there are a few, but they're still the minority.

My own aversion to working digital is *huge*. It's just too hard to change now. I can see that it's possible, because [storyboard artist] Steve [Wolfhard]'s digital drawings are perfect, but for me, everything just comes out crummy looking.

For the paper-only folks like myself, you draw the first draft on letter-size paper, four panels per sheet. Then, for the final draft, you blow it up on the photocopier—approximately 166 percent—in a way that leaves you with two legal-size sheets with two panels on each. Then you redraw a lot of it on a light box, tracing the good stuff and refiguring the bad, and that's the final board.

Pat McHale noticed that the medium chosen significantly affected the work produced. Because of the ease in copying poses, pasting them, and redrawing small parts of them to create new poses, drawing digital boards allowed artists to focus too much attention on the wrong things while forsaking the more important details.

Pat McHale: In the early days of the show, we had a bunch of people working digitally, while Pen, Adam,



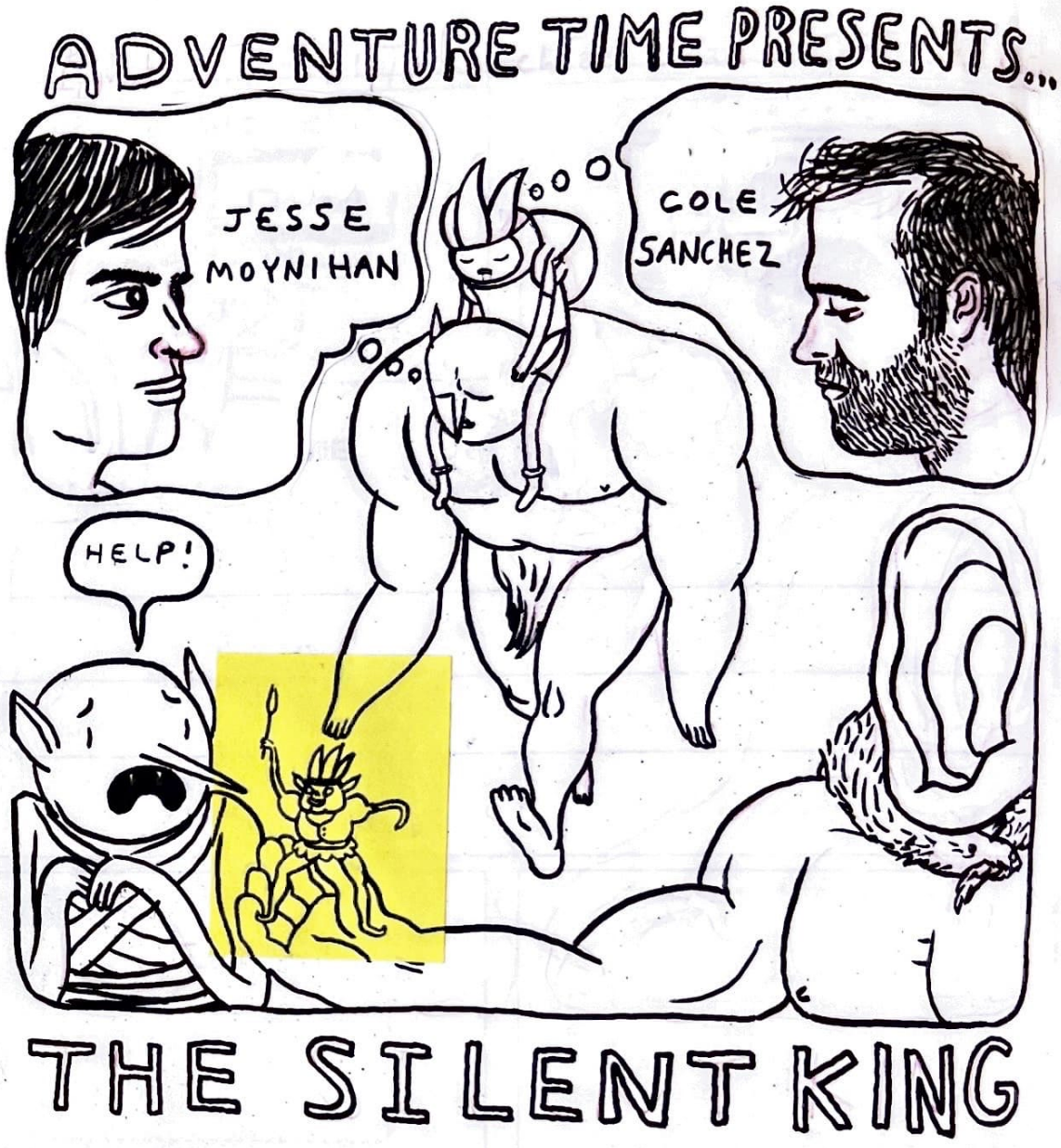
and I always worked on paper. The digital boards were really tough to give notes on—we'd print them out—because there were too many poses in the rough boards, and it felt like working digitally was forcing the board artists to focus on the wrong things: focusing on "drawing" and "writing" rather than "storytelling." Eventually, we pretty much said, "No one can work digitally anymore." It sounds like people may have started doing some digital boarding again, but . . . well . . . to me, working on paper for the rough board is pretty necessary. . . . I can't imagine working digitally for that. But doing digital cleanup makes sense, so long as the pacing of the story is figured out and you feel comfortable drawing digitally. Paper cleanup still always looks better to me, though.

Seo Kim: When I worked [freelance] from Toronto, I did my boards on a Cintiq, only because without anyone around me as an example, it seemed like a *way* more time-saving and less daunting option than paper—even though I personally prefer to work with paper and pencil. I think it worked okay, but I never really got the hang of it. Once I moved down to the studio, I was really happy to be able to transition to paper, as I could pick up techniques from all the people around me who were using paper. Also it's more practical here to use paper than it was at home, because we don't have to worry about scanning the pages ourselves (plus, there's a copy machine). Now,





JMOYNS + ACASTA
MONDAY @ 7:30 PM
CARTOON NETWORK



This page: Unofficial promotional images for "One Last Job" and "The Silent King" by Jesse Moynihan.



Left: Development of Abracadaniel by Jesse Moynihan and Ako Castuera.

Below: Ron James, wizard, by Jesse Moynihan.

like most people, I do both thumbnails and cleanup with paper and pencils and pens. I'm pretty mystified by Steve [Wolfhard]'s Cintiq ability, though. I think he really knows how to use it to his advantage, whereas most everyone else kind of draws a bit stiffer or worse or slower with the computer. His drawings just look really beautiful and finished without any compromise . . . I'm a big Steve fan!

Kent Osborne: Working on paper is better for me because you can go work in a coffee shop or at the bowling alley and not be distracted by the Internet. Also, I'm a big dummy who can barely use Photoshop.

To push the story lines into unexpected territory, the storyboard artists are well aware that they need to find a way to always add their personalities and individual experience to the mix in an open and creative way.

Jesse Moynihan: When you get an outline, or help write an outline, the character arcs and throughlines are pretty broad, unless we hash out extra details in the handout meeting [the meeting in which storyboard artists receive their new episode outlines]. I think it's an intentional way of giving breathing room to the boarder to find a "way in" to the characters. By "way in," I mean identifying something in the outline that relates to your own life experience and drawing it out. The hope is that your life experience isn't just yours and resonates with everyone watching. The effect is you get something that feels simultaneously specific and relatable. So whoever's watching feels like the character is speaking to them very intimately. It's interesting to me that the more specific you get with your writing, the easier it is to connect. That's how I've always felt about TV and movies. The broader the drama or humor, the harder it is for me to stay engaged. Then, if a character does or says something idiosyncratic, I usually perk up and start to feel immersed in their world.

Sometimes I'll do a pass on a board just to get the pacing right. I'll sit on it and realize that it's only telling a story and not giving any insight or reflecting much on a life lived. So then you have to take one step further into your dank well and force something. These are things you can use for any character. I think we have the capacity to be every kind of person: good, terrible, deep, shallow, naïve, jaded, etc. . . . So when you're writing for Marceline, you think about what embarrassing part of you is like Marceline, and why you keep that part of you hidden. At least that's what I do when I write for her.

Rebecca Sugar: The show has evolved a lot, and I think that has to do with how open Pen was to other people's ideas as long as they were coming from a real place. . . . You couldn't mimic anybody's way to make the show. That's the ultimate way to get stuff shot down . . . to do something the way a cartoon would conventionally do it, or to try and write like someone else on the show. If stuff rang hollow, everybody felt it.





Above: Cited by Pen in one of the guiding documents created for the season one crew, a specific scene from the 1979 film *Meatballs*, in which Bill Murray's character comforts a younger camper in a funny, caring way, is the model for Jake's relationship with Finn. Here, Jake comforts Finn and rebuilds his confidence after Finn is distressed about seeing so many old ladies get zapped in the episode "The Enchiridion!"

Opposite: Unofficial promotional art for "Wizard Battle" by Jesse Moynihan, and shots of Abracadaniel struggling with his magic.

Cole Sanchez: Writing Finn has changed as the seasons have moved on. In the beginning, he felt more emotional and reactionary, and now he's mellowed out a bit more. He's still reactionary, but it seems like he has more moments of self-reflection. The main thing I do to keep his character feeling right is just being able to relate to Finn's actions. Meaning, I feel for the parts of his character that are my personality and plug those elements into his behavior. I can relate to being young and only wanting to do good things for people and having a strict moral code and being adventurous. It's pretty fun to think in that mind-set.

Writing Jake is the same process. To me, he's a goofy dude. His experience and maturity make him more of the caretaker, even though Finn and Jake have a roommate/brother relationship. In the early seasons, Pen cited a scene in *Meatballs* where Bill Murray, who plays a camp counselor, comforts a kid who's getting picked on. Bill Murray was so caring and sweet and funny—his performance felt really *good*. That scene is still at the heart of Jake for me. When I write Jake, I try to re-create that feeling.

I identify with Ice King too much. When I write him, sometimes I'm just writing the stuff I did the day before. I won't say what, because that is embarrassing. Something about living alone causes you to really match up with the Ice King's mental state. Ah, geez, do I want to be telling people that? So embarrassing.

Ako Castuera: Unlike Cole, I'm almost never alone in my house, but part of me is a needy weirdo with delusions of grandeur, so the Ice King is a strangely comfortable character to inhabit.

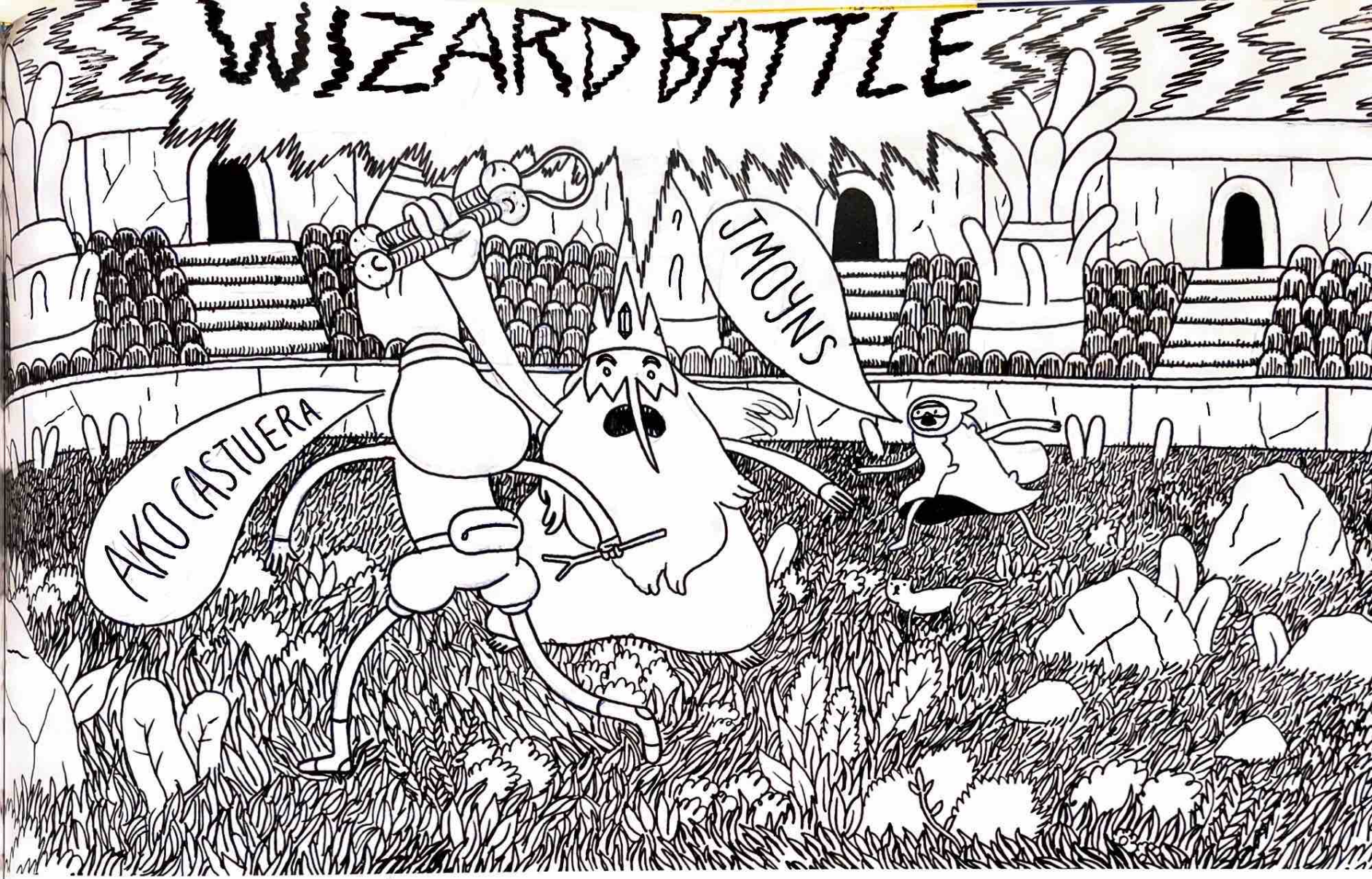
Finn used to have a more limited range under my authorship; I used to try to thwart him. I felt that his zeal for heroism, though innocent, was a quality that needed to be constantly challenged. He was a simple and semi-illiterate child when I first "met" him. The fact that he constantly makes mistakes and learns from them makes me love Finn, and that allows me to give him wider emotional play.

On the other hand, I've always felt at home with Jake's character. He can be devious, lazy, selfish, or scheming, but at his core he has a steadfast loyalty to Finn and a generally good-natured outlook on life. Jake's not going to change a lot, but he's so flexible in personality—and body—that he's always got story potential.

It took me a while to "feel" Marceline. Writing for her as a child in "Memory of a Memory" gave me my key into her personality. We commonly refer to Marceline as being in a state of arrested development. Her superficial "emo" qualities and teenage affectations hide a truly vulnerable character, and her negativity always makes me want to push her further toward what she honestly loves.

(Continued on page 255)

WIZARD BATTLE







"LADY & PEEBLES"

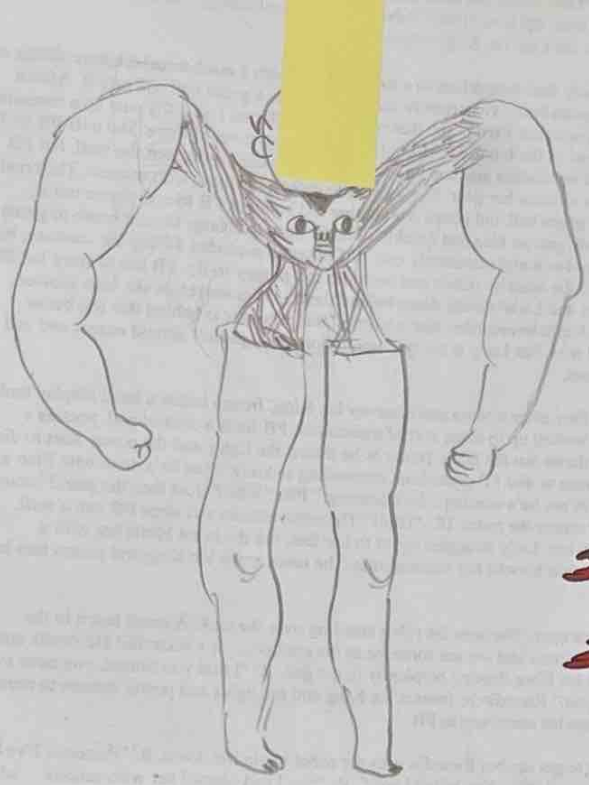
In "Lady and Peebles," the Ice King's heart, Ricardio the Heart Guy, has escaped Ice King's body once again in an attempt to capture Princess Bubblegum's affection. In an extra-special bid to impress her, Ricardio has built himself a "man" body out of sinewy flesh that he is especially pleased with and eager to use.



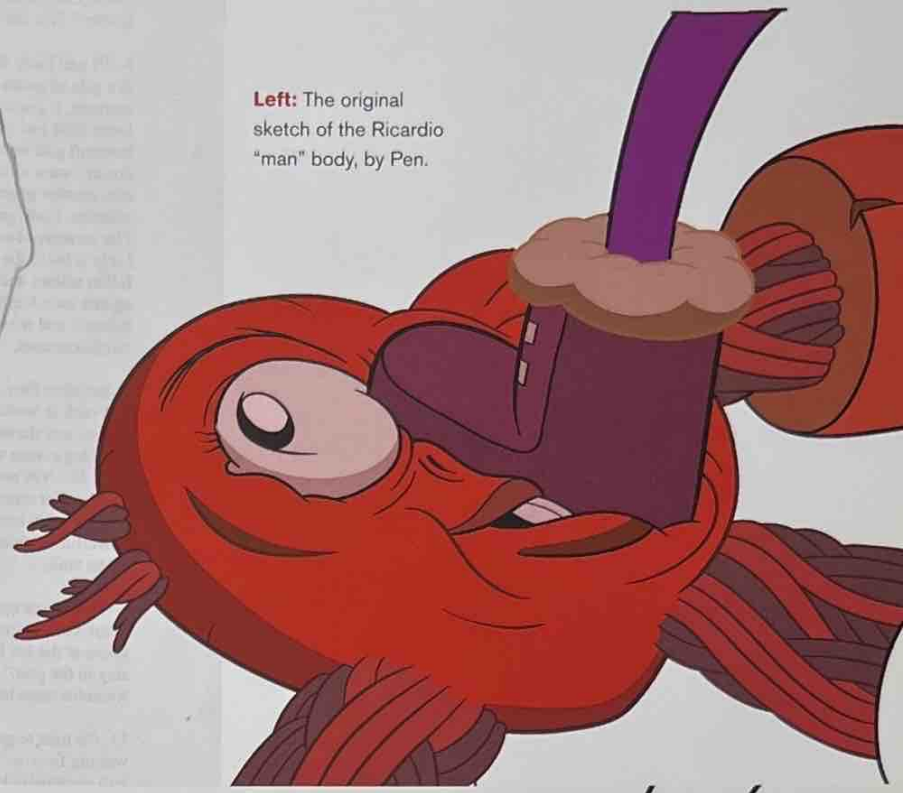
This page: Close-up view of a thumbnail storyboard panel of Ricardio the Heart Guy by Rebecca Sugar from the episode "Lady & Peebles."

Left: Final Ricardio character model by Andy Ristaino.





Left: The original sketch of the Ricardio "man" body, by Pen.





Above: Final Ricardio "man" model and special face close-up designs by Andy Ristaino.

Right: Special-pose designs of Ricardio's face being stepped on, by Robertryan Cory.





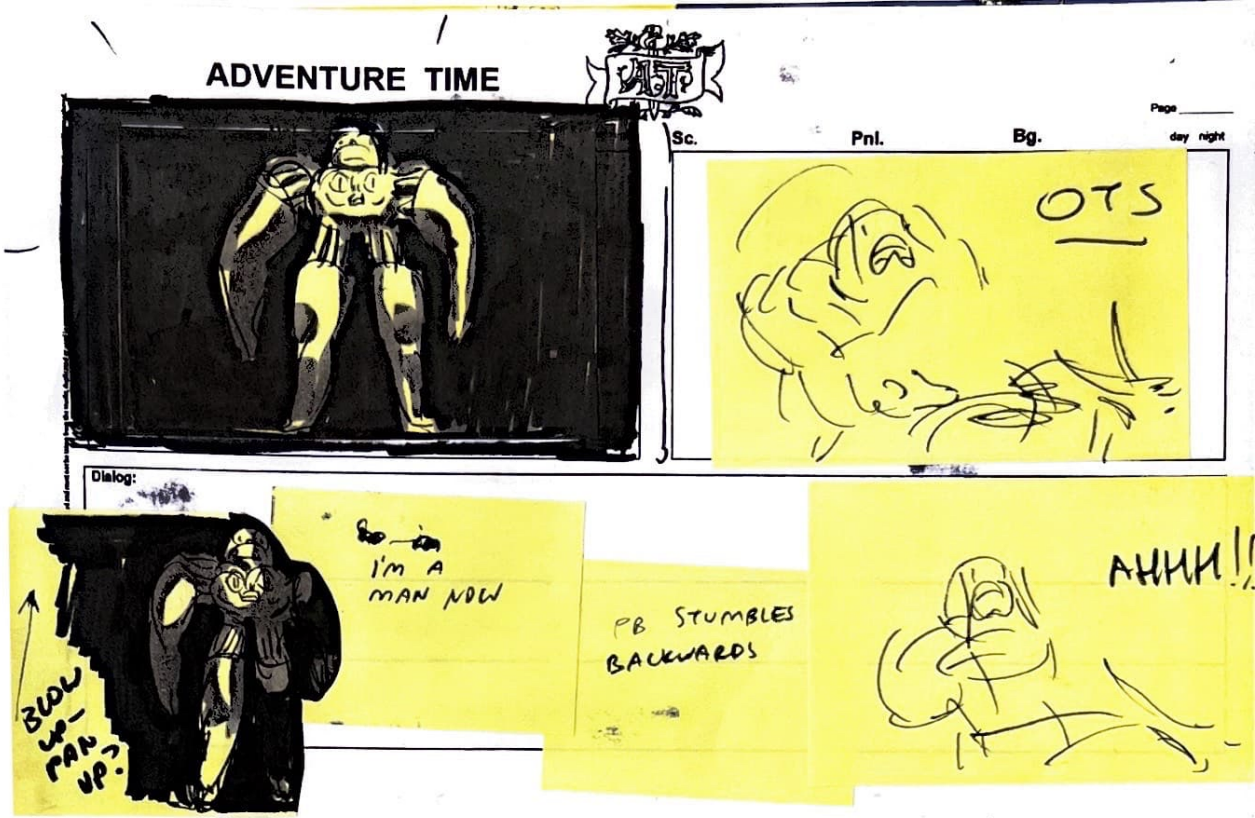
Opposite: Princess Bubblegum and a pregnant Lady Rainicorn grapple with Ricardio the Heart Guy's fleshy dungeon and the muscular organ himself in these framegrabs from "Lady & Peebles."

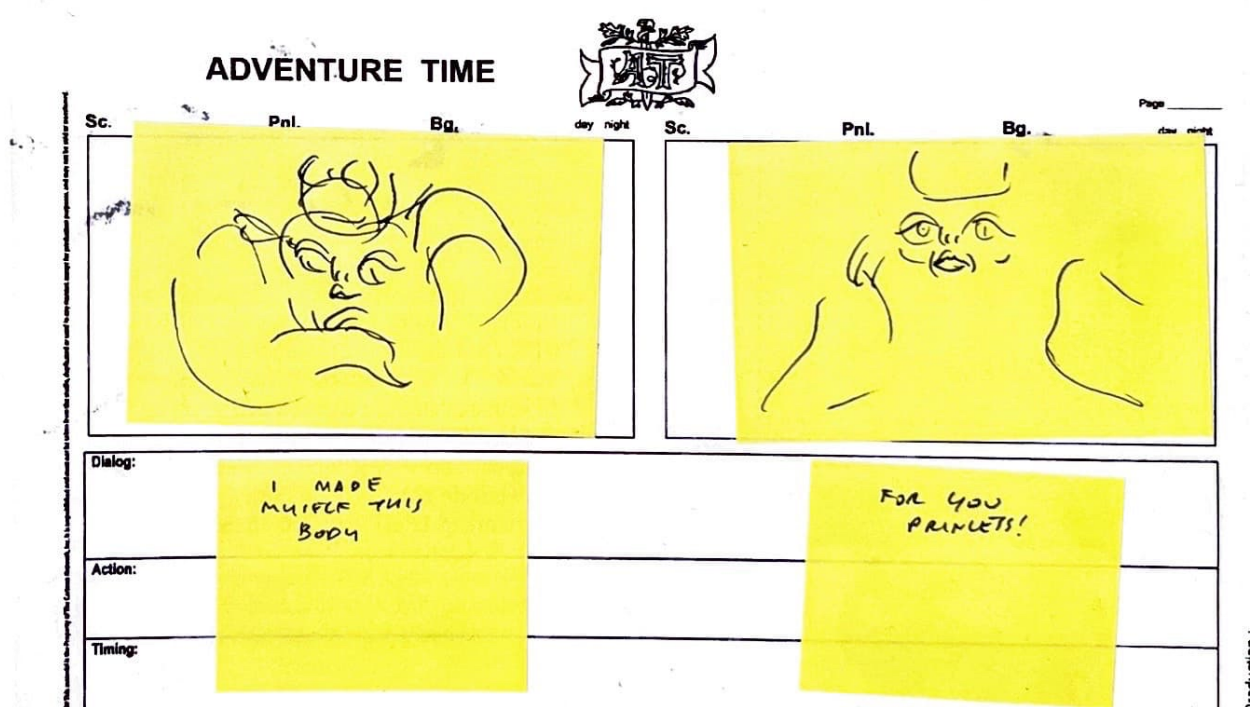
Right: A page of thumbnail storyboards by Rebecca Sugar from the episode "Lady & Peebles."

(Continued from page 250)

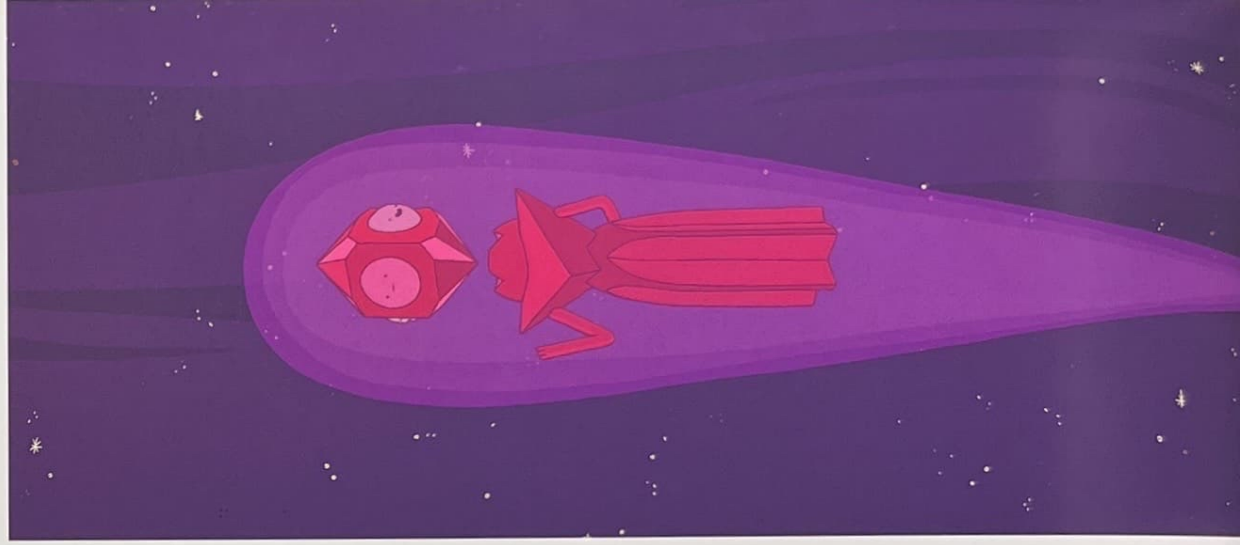
Ako Castuera (continued): I think reading a lot as a kid gave me access to a variety of characters and complexities within their personalities. Also I was constantly drawing. I like to watch people when they draw—you can sometimes see emotions flicker on their faces as they feel their characters. Anyway, in translating "acting" to drawing, it's more important to me to "feel" than "express." I tried to keep my acting minimal for the most part, but I also wanted to make the boards visually carry the emotions and the plot, so that they would read even if the sound was muted. At the same time, keeping the voice acting in mind can really shape how we write for characters. Sometimes, when you get an unexpected read [recorded performance from the voice actor], it can really throw the writing into a different direction than what was intended. That can work for or against a character, so it's a good thing to keep in mind. Often we're writing for characters that haven't been cast yet, so it can be a disappointing or marvelous surprise to see and hear what comes back from the voice actor.

The time I wrote for Lemongrab gave me fear of going offtrack. His extreme personality was already fully formed. It was super weird and forceful, but it could easily be flattened into a cartoonish mouthpiece for catchphrasey imitation, and that would be . . . unacceptable. I was just really glad that Jesse handled most of Lemongrab on "Mystery Dungeon."













Sometimes, in the quest to dig deep into such personal wells, storyboard artists can scrape a nerve.

Jesse Moynihan: When I was working on "Sons of Mars," I gave Magic Man a hint of backstory. Years ago something had gone wrong while Magic Man was climbing a mountain with someone named Margles. This event caused him to go insane and do bad things to the people of Mars. "Margles" was a pet name I had for my ex-girlfriend. I was right at the end of a longtime struggle with our breakup, and I used Magic Man's story as a way of exorcising my final feelings about it. I also used it as a way of getting into Magic Man—because his character is so opaque, it was hard for me to find a way to write for him otherwise. Magic Man had gone insane because I had gone insane. That's how I felt about it. I thought it would be brave to transmit such a personal statement into a cartoon, so I gave it a shot. Ultimately I think I took it too far. I wish I had scaled it back just slightly to obscure the idea and keep Magic Man at a bit of a distance. It's hard to know how far to go with explaining a character, or imbuing them with pathos or a personal agenda. In this situation I feel like I was partially successful. I'm overall really proud of that episode, but also there's a tinge of regret regarding a certain aspect of my contribution.

Thomas Herpich: In the "Lemonhope" episode, there's a part where he comes across a burning village and his only response is to marvel at how warm it feels, which is based pretty faithfully on a time in my life when I learned something disappointing about myself. My friend and I were driving home from a movie one night and stopped in front of this house that was really on fire, with no fire trucks there yet or anything. My buddy ran up on the porch to help restrain this lady who was flipping out, trying to get back inside to find her dog, while I just stood on the sidewalk by the car amazed at how hot I felt even standing a hundred feet from the house.

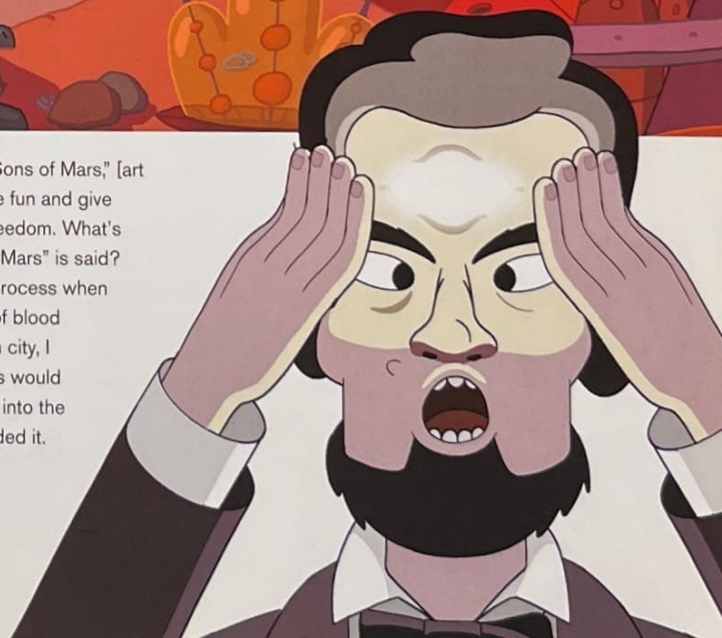
Rebecca Sugar: It really felt like we were all trying to out-honesty each other at some point. At least I felt really challenged to do that. If you weren't explaining your personal philosophy, or admitting some genuine fear that haunts your life, then it wouldn't be interesting, and it definitely wouldn't be funny. Everyone around me was making the best fine art packaged in my total favorite form of commercial entertainment, and I was just dying—it was the best idea ever to do something like that, and I was trying to keep up and really write modern poetry and draw really good, really funny cartoons.

Opposite: Scenes from "Sons of Mars."

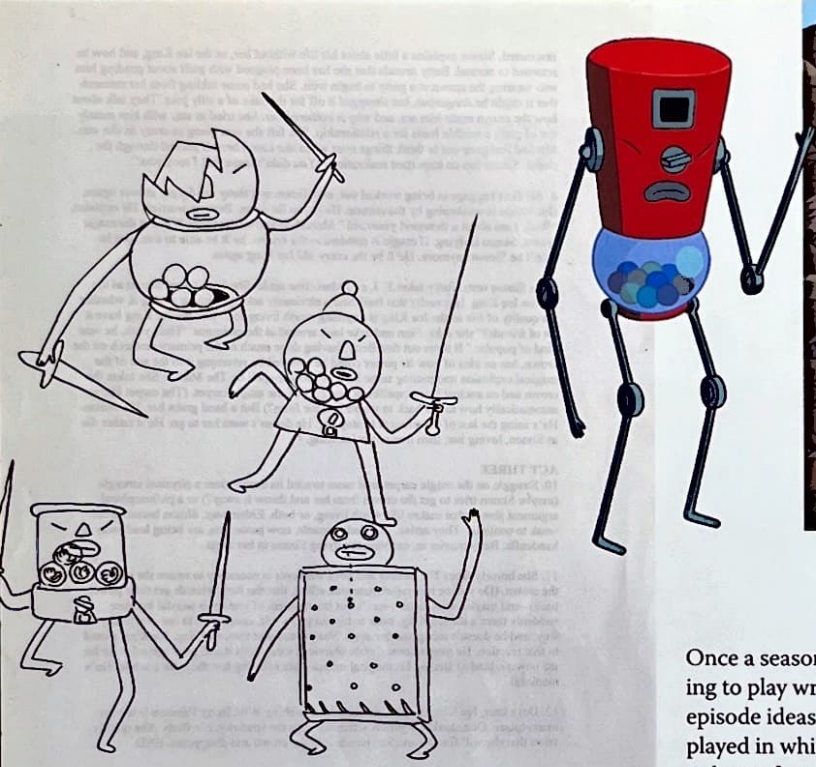
Right: The love-powered interplanetary transporter; Finn squeezing Magic Man disguised as Jake; Abe Lincoln, King of Mars.



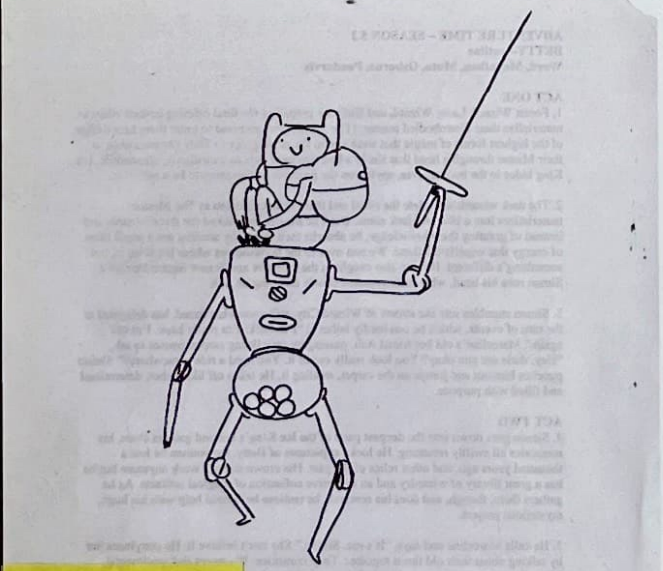




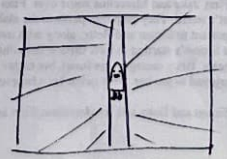
Background designer Santino Lascano: With "Sons of Mars," [art director] Nick [Jennings] pretty much told me to have fun and give him something fantastic. That left me with a ton of freedom. What's the first thing a person thinks about when the word "Mars" is said? Red. And what's red? Blood. That was my thought process when I designed the plant life. I designed them based off of blood cells and veins. As for the architecture of the Martian city, I first thought of audio speakers and the way the wires would connect to a component system. That's what turned into the arena and the four triangular structures that surrounded it. The rest of the city design fell into place after that.











Once a season, the crew holds an out-of-studio meeting to play writers' games, ostensibly to create new episode ideas. An "exquisite corpse"–style game is played in which everyone draws an image at the top of a sheet of paper, and then passes it on. In rapid succession, each person writes the first-act idea for an episode based on the drawing in front of them, then passes it along and writes the second and third acts on the next and following sheets that are passed their way. The process is meant to be creative, fun, and low-pressure, with the added bonus that it occasionally produces a usable episode seed. Solid story ideas, however, originate with more consistency from the storyboard artists themselves, who are naturally invested in the kind of outlines that come down the production pipeline.

Jesse Moynihan: It seems to me, more and more, that juicy ideas come from just shooting the breeze in people's offices or at lunch, or from seeing an episode someone pitched and getting inspired to continue on a theme. The few ideas I've brought to the writers have mostly come from bouncing thoughts off people in the hallways and hanging out on couches.

I know the off-site writers' games have yielded some fruit, but I prefer when the idea appears while riding my bike or taking a shower, and then running it by Pen or Adam or Kent or Jack and seeing what they think.

Thomas Herpich: Lately, Steve [Wolfhard] and I have been coming up with the majority of the "germs" for the stories we end up boarding. For me, I think this is part of trying to keep myself challenged and excited. It helps me bite off more than I can chew, which I like, and it helps keep the stories personally relevant, which gives me a sort of guiding star and sense of purpose in the writing.

Definitely, though, the majority of the episodes I've ever boarded have come from Pen, Pat, Kent, and the other writers. Only a couple have come out of these group writing exercises. The only one I can really think of actually is "Puhoy," which pretty much just popped out of an exquisite corpse writers' game almost fully formed, and all I had to do was say, "Oooh—that one, I want that one."

Kent Osborne: Yeah, "Puhoy," "One Last Job," "Rattleballs," and "Jake the Brick" are the only episodes I can think of that came directly from off-sites. We feel pretty lucky if we get one solid idea out of them. For me, the off-site is just a nice opportunity to get out of the office, be in a room with everyone at once, and have fun trying to make each other laugh. The meetings are usually held in a hotel conference room, but we also did one at Pen's apartment and one at a restaurant that was closed (which was a bad idea because they were using that time to renovate their restrooms with noisy power tools).



Jesse, Tom, and Steve are really great at coming up with awesome stories from scratch. They'll usually say they have a germ of an idea for something, and then they'll hand you a fully fleshed-out outline and you're like, "Okay, my work here is done."

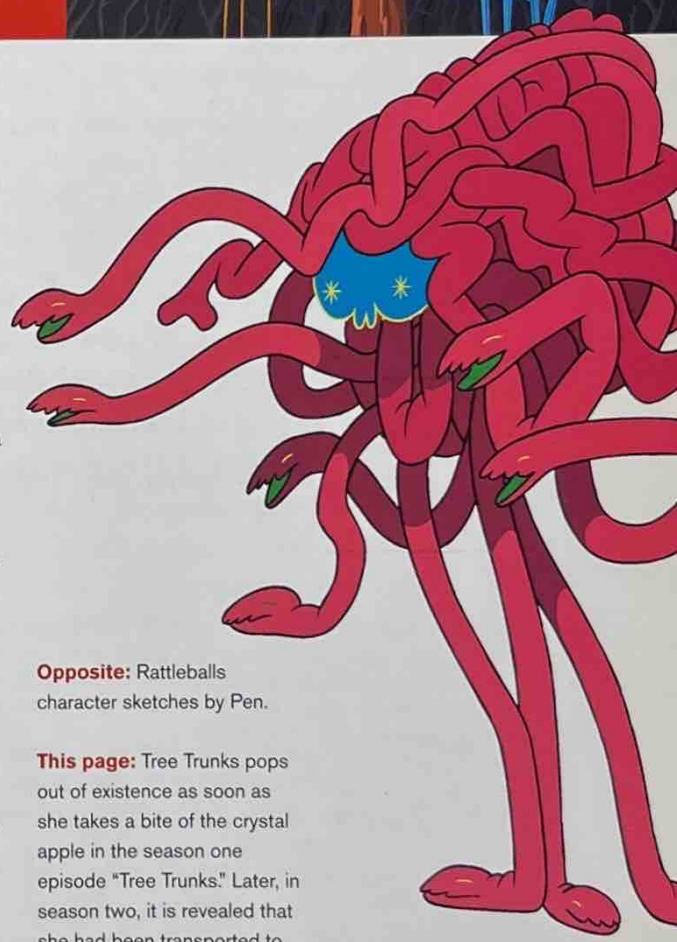
In the writers' room, a lot of the stories come from Pen; we'll sit down on Monday, and he'll either already have an idea for what he wants to work on that week or we'll brainstorm different characters and try and figure out who we haven't seen in a while and go from there. We usually like to have at least a couple of Ice King stories per season, one Lumpy Space Princess story, one for Tree Trunks, one for BMO, Lemongrab, Marceline, etc. Sometimes we'll get inspired by news stories or videos on the Internet. The craziest stories can come from simple inspirations.

Ako Castuera: I believe the idea for "Her Parents" also came from the first off-site at Castaway restaurant. It went through a lot of changes from that point. I found the off-sites to be inconvenient and fun, like a field trip. Sometimes they were embarrassing, like when I couldn't resolve an idea in the time allowed and had to pinch off a stinker. But I really liked spending time with all the writers at once (most of us would never get to see Jack Pendarvis otherwise) [Pendarvis is a resident of Mississippi who primarily works via video conferences with the other writers]. We may not get any ideas that turn into episodes, but we pull things from our brains that wouldn't have come out any other way.

The random, organic creative process that happens outside of structured work time is the richest ground for ideas. But in my view, the off-sites are a counterpoint that reinforce the culture of the show. As it relates to *Adventure Time*, I think of culture as a vital force that expresses itself through many individuals. It is a unified body that holds together everybody's efforts; its shape is defined by us as much as our work is defined by it. Within that body, ideas and experiences are constantly being thrown around; some of them find resonance and become themes, scenes, jokes, or fully formed episodes. Some of them just hang in the air and help define whatever's in the foreground. In my mind, the off-sites mark that we're part of a shared creative endeavor, and that being in the same place at the same time has its own value.

Adam Muto: I think that the writers' game is often passed around [during interviews] because it makes the writing process seem more fun and whimsical. The truth is that we think about the show all the time, constantly hypothesizing and drawing connections between characters and plot points. There's a level of fervor that would probably just be scary if we accurately described it.

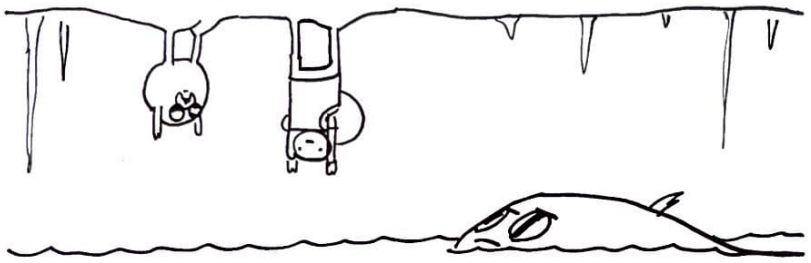
(Continued on page 262)



Opposite: Rattleballs character sketches by Pen.

This page: Tree Trunks pops out of existence as soon as she takes a bite of the crystal apple in the season one episode "Tree Trunks." Later, in season two, it is revealed that she had been transported to the Crystal Dimension.

WRITERS' GAMES



Finn's tired of being scared of the ocean, so him and Jake go to take a little swim at the beach. They're immediately swallowed by a whale. Inside that whale is a smaller whale who also swallows them. Inside that whale they meet Cosby the whale. He's too scared to eat them, cuz it's his first time, so he imprisons them on the ceiling while he works up the nerve.

ACT 2 Cosby can't bring himself to do it so he busies himself with things he would normally do around the stomach. Washing the dishes sweeping, cleaning off barnacles. Finn and Jake can't stand it any more. watching all that cleaning is making them nervous. "What can we do to help?" says Finn.

ACT 3 COSBY: "MAYBE Y'ALL COULD PRE-DIGEST YOURSELVES SOME.
(E) NAW. BUT MAYBE WE COULD WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THE WHALES OUTSIDE THROW UP, SNEEZE, ETC SO THEY CAN ~~CAN A~~ ALL BREATHE FREE AIR AGAIN.
COSBY IS SURPRISED TO FIND OUT THAT THERE ARE WHALES WITHIN WHALES. HIS WORLD VIEW IS EXPLODED SO FAST THAT HE CAN'T TAKE. HE RELEASES FINN + JAKE AND EATS HIMSELF OUT OF EXISTENCE

... THE OTHER WHALES POOP F+J OUT.

THE END.



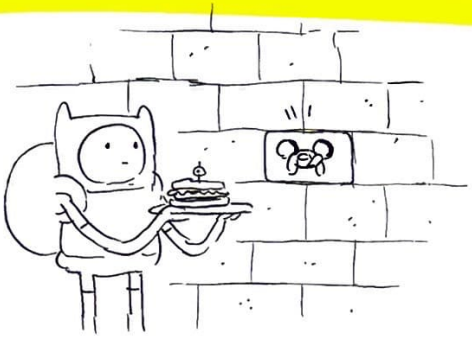
~~B~~ 1) Ever since Bmo Got Back from the Factory he's Been out-of-Control! Finn and Jake don't know what to do. After consulting the Yellow Pages they Contact the Local Robot TRAINER. TRI-MO!!! ~~Tm~~ who's approach to training Robots seems Less than Appropriate.

~~an her dreams~~ TRI-MO treats BMO like a dog, keeping him in line by asserting alpha dominance on him. His training method is too abusive, and BMO needs to escape.

After BMO accidentally spills a glass of water and TRI-MO rubs BMO's face in the puddle, BMO decides enough is enough, makes a break for it. TRI-MO ~~tries~~ chases after BMO and slips and falls in the puddle of water. TRI-MO's electronics short out and he dies. BMO says "Nice try... MO!"

THE END.

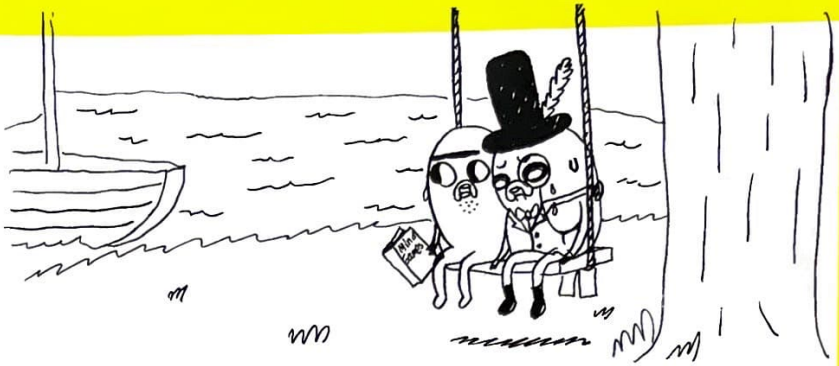
This spread: Four writers' game results created during one of the crew's off-site meetings. The exquisite corpse–like game occasionally produces usable germs of ideas, such as "Puhoy," "Jake the Brick," "Rattleballs," and "One Last Job." Just as often, the anything-goes stories end with "and everyone dies," some rather adult language, or "sorry, guys!"



• KIM KIL WHAN, JAKE'S SON, IS TERRIBLE AT BEING AN ADULT, HIS LIFE IS FALLING APPART, HE CAN'T PAY BILLS, HE CAN'T COOK, EVERYTHING IN HIS HOUSE IS BROKEN. JAKE WANTS TO HELP BUT ALL K.K.W. WANTS IS FOR JAKE TO BE A BRICK TO STOP A DRAFT IN HIS ROOM. JAKE WANTS TO GIVE HIM ADVICE ON LIFE BUT NO "BE ~~QUIET~~ QUIET AND BE MY BRICK, DAD."

Jake, Jake's self is terrible at being an adult his son's life is falling apart because he's a helpless [redacted], and Jake thinks that accomodating him is the only solution. "Way to go, dad." Finn wants to help but all Jake wants is a sandwich. Finn tries to give him advice, but no, "~~Shh~~ Be quiet and give me a sandwich, Finn!"

Jake remains a brick for 40 years. His son, lying on his deathbed, grants his dad freedom. But now being a brick is all Jake knows. It hasn't been a bad life. After Kim Kil Whan dies, the house is demolished and Jake goes on to become a doorstop... at Finn's house! The two old friends, have some kind of incredible adventure, then Jake goes back to being a doorstop.



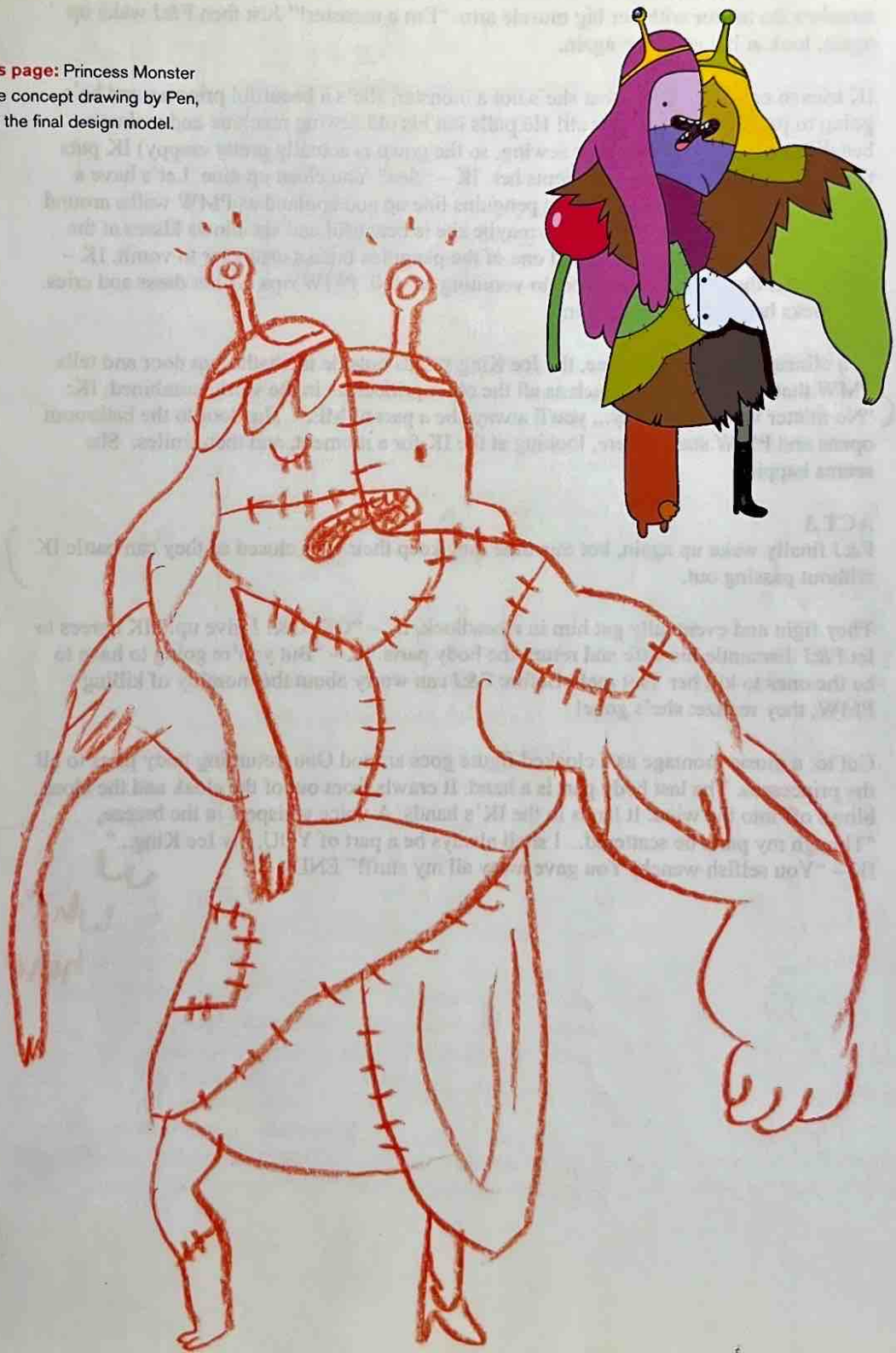
Not sure.

Jake has an identity crisis maybe? that guy with the one eyebrow asks him: "Would you like to play some mind games?

Jake reluctantly agrees. Eyebrow guy breaks down Jake's personality and rebuilds him as Randy Butternubs. Somehow Jake is still dis-satisfied. Eyebrow asks if he'd like to play some mind games but Jake says No. Randy doesn't enjoy games. He enjoys being sad and alone. He takes a boat and sails to a distant uninhabitated island.

JAKE IS LIKE "WHAT? THIS WAS YOUR GAME. YOU HAD ME REBUILD YOU INTO 'RANDY BUTTERNUBS' AND DIDN'T LIKE IT? OR AM I 'RANDY?'.. I FORGET.

AT NIGHT JAKE ~~WHISPERS~~ WHISPERS INTO FINN'S ~~EAR~~ EAR... TEACHING HIM TO BECOME "RANDY BUTTERNUGGET"



This page: Princess Monster Wife concept drawing by Pen, and the final design model.

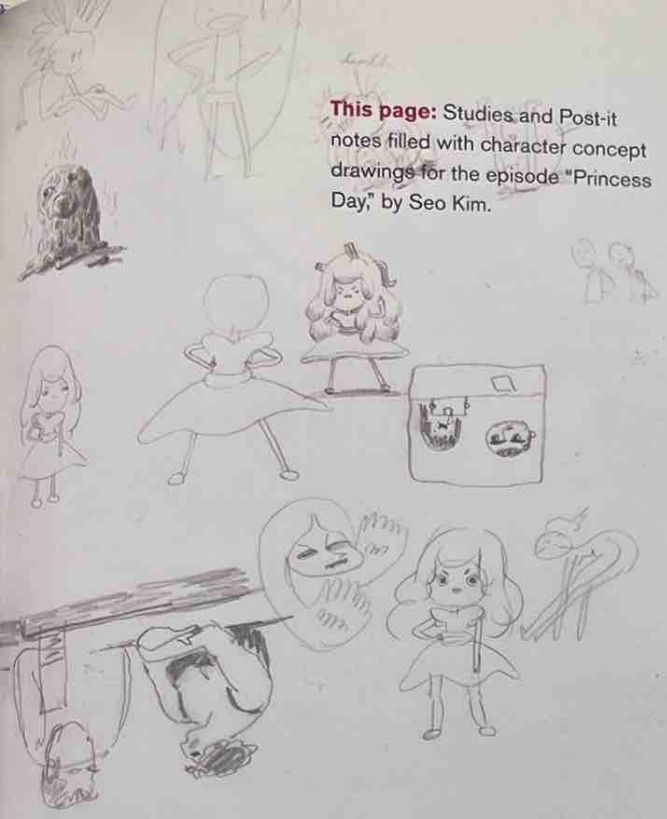
(Continued from page 259)

As part of *Adventure Time*'s unpredictability and humor, the storyboard artists often intentionally subvert well-worn children's cartoon tropes, such as the "lesson learned" resolution at the end of an episode. In "What Was Missing," the thieving Door Lord gets caught and teaches a lesson about friendship, until he promptly gets beaten and tied up by Finn and Jake. In "Freak City," Magic Man teaches Finn and Jake a lesson, but the lesson is simply that he is a huge jerk. There are unpredictable, jarring endings, too, such as Tree Trunks exploding an instant before her premiere episode, "Tree Trunks," ends—with no resolution until a season later.

Jesse Moynihan: When I was growing up, I don't know why, but I always felt insulted by messages in cartoons. I grew up in the '80s, when I guess messages were mandatory? Like in *G.I. Joe* and *Inspector Gadget*. And there were always these spineless shows like *The Get Along Gang* and *Doug* that tried to inseminate their safety ideology in me, which I interpreted as compromise or weakness of spirit. My favorite kids' programming usually celebrated risk and the subjectivity of morality and intention.

Pat McHale: Taking clichés and standing them on their head is also a way of making the show more accessible, perhaps? I don't know if anyone else thinks about that, but it always seemed neat that the concept of the show was completely cliché: a boy and his dog fighting an evil wizard to save the princess. Even the details of the Ice King and Princess Bubblegum are pretty cliché. But when you start layering in some depth to those characters and you start messing with the audience's expectations, it starts being fun to watch.

In the old Chuck Norris cartoon, *Chuck Norris: Karate Kommandos*, I remember there was this moment when alligators came parachuting out of the sky for seemingly no reason and Norris immediately starts fighting them. In the early days of *Adventure Time*, we had fun purposefully writing stuff that felt awkward and surreal like that. Any catchphrases



This page: Studies and Post-it notes filled with character concept drawings for the episode "Princess Day," by Seo Kim.

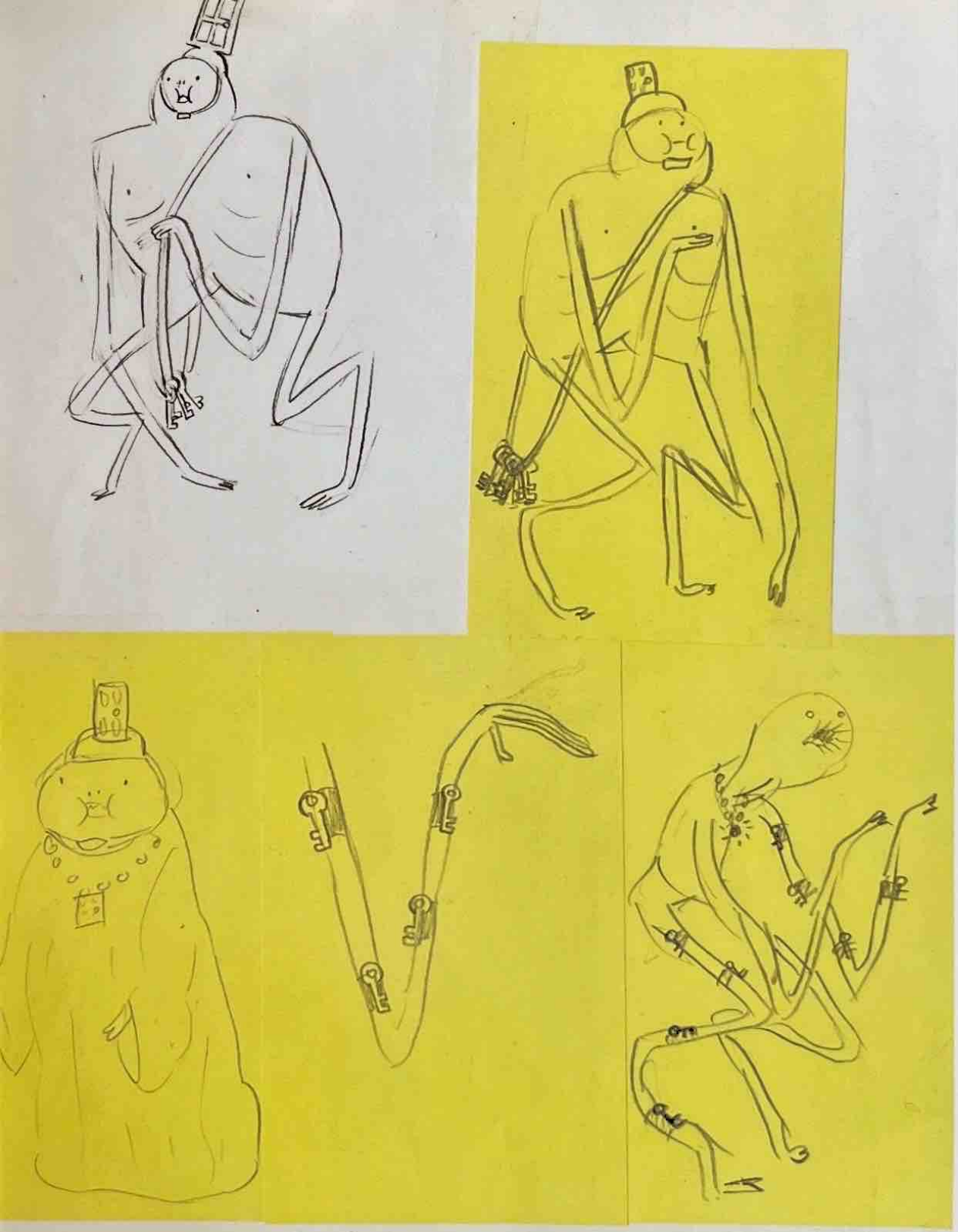
we wrote were to be used only once or twice, and then discarded so they didn't become actual catchphrases (although "Check, please!" is a funny exception . . . maybe because it makes a joke of our own cliché of trying not to write traditional-sounding catchphrases).

MUSIC

Many of the creative crew on *Adventure Time* also write and perform music, which has been a unique component to the series since its beginning. Songs are sometimes used as exposition, as in "Evicted!," in which an extended song sung by Pen narrates Finn and Jake's search for a new home. Sometimes songs are used as an integral plot element, such as in "What Was Missing," in which Finn, Jake, Princess Bubblegum, and Marceline need to sing a song together about how they honestly feel before a magical door will let them pass, and it takes several attempts.







Left: The Door Lord concept drawings by Pen for the episode "What Was Missing."

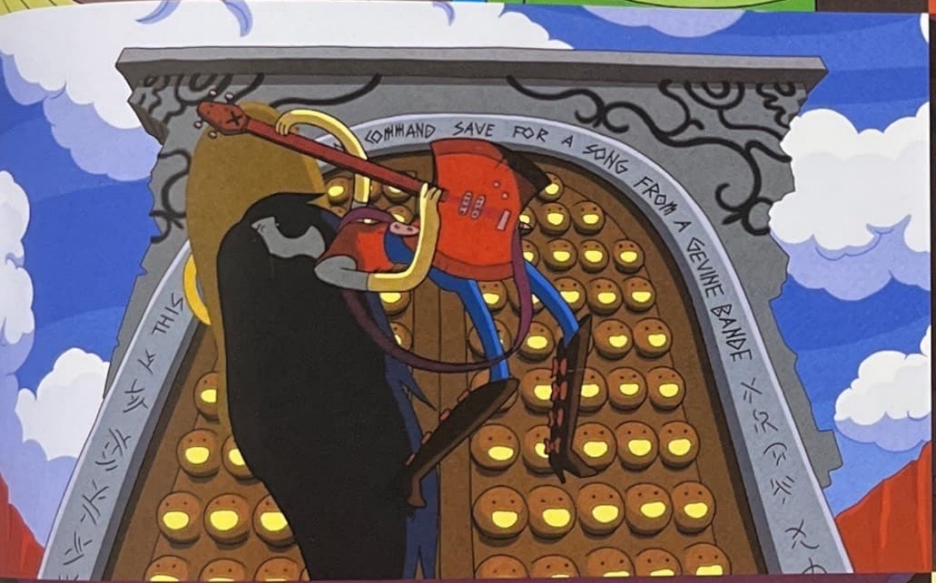
Opposite: Scenes from the episode "What Was Missing," which include two songs written by storyboard artist Rebecca Sugar.

Rebecca Sugar: "What Was Missing" was a case where there were these "song goes here" spots in the outline, which were really difficult to write, especially because the first song was supposed to be bad, and the second song was supposed to be the most amazing song ever. I wasn't sure how to get my head around writing something "bad" or "good," so I tried to think about it more as "dishonest" vs. "honest," and then I tried to find something real I could latch on to. Marceline's song was based on a really frustrating falling-out I had before moving to California. . . . This person seemed really fed up with me, and I probably deserved it. . . . I wanted to make things right between us, and I kept trying and messing up. I ended up furious at this person, but at the same time I desperately wanted to be friends. The more furious I was, the more I wanted to be friends. It was a bizarre, awful feeling. So I had Marceline almost say that in her song, and then catch herself and take it back. I actually wrote that one second even though it comes first in the episode. . . . The second song, Finn's song, was easier and was based on how I felt about the *Adventure Time* crew. I felt young and inexperienced and was surrounded by these amazing artists whom I idolized and couldn't wait to see every day. . . . I wanted to write about how much I just loved being around everyone even if it was just the forced interaction of being at work. I had a really, really hard time working on this episode and a lot of it was drawn really rough because I took so much time to write the music. But I learned a lot about what I needed to do to dig my heels into writing songs because nothing was coming out until I made it personal like that.

(Continued on page 273)

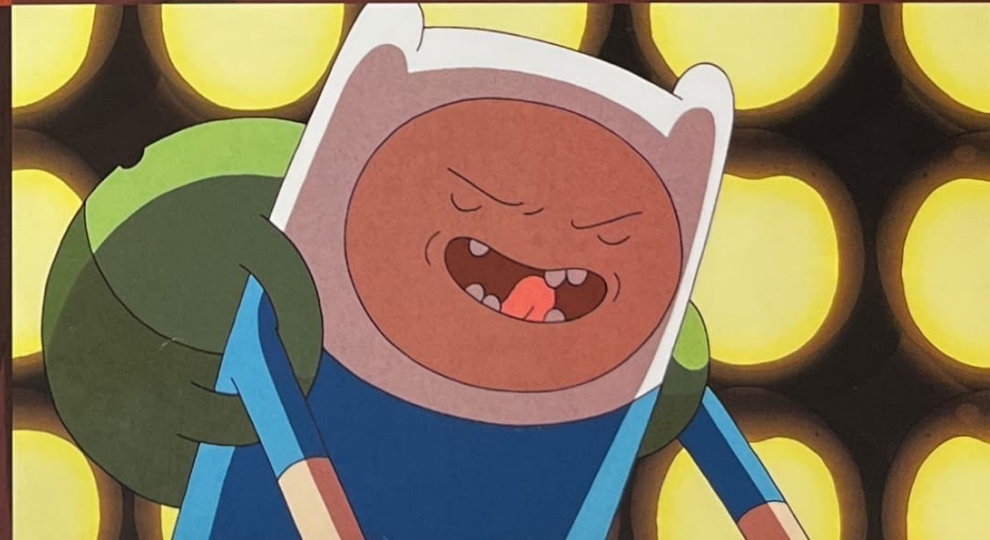



BMO

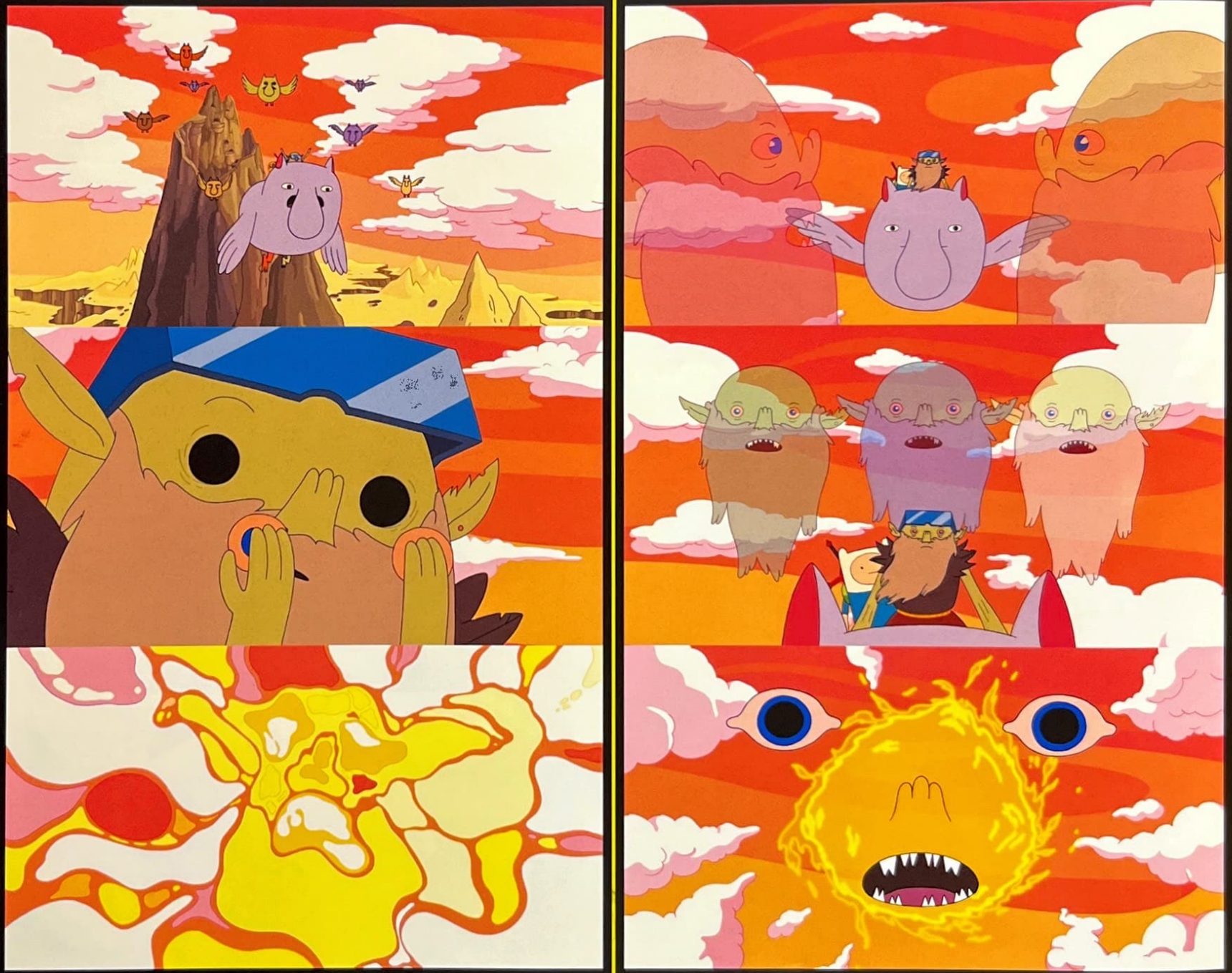

COMMAND SAVE FOR A SONG FROM A DEVINE BANDE







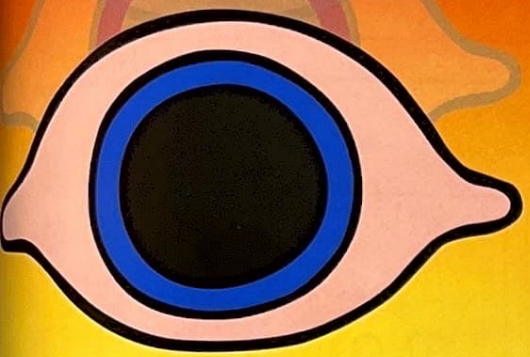
"THE GREAT BIRD MAN"





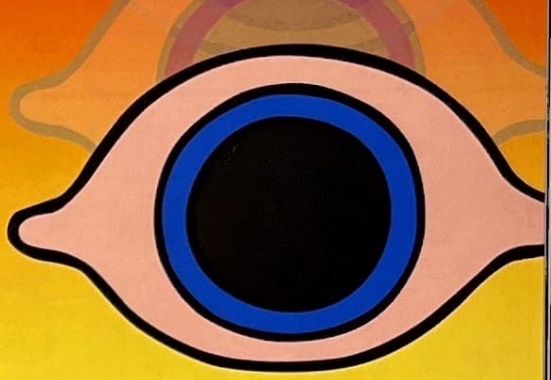


This spread: Jesse Moynihan storyboarded this section of "The Great Bird Man" and wrote the lyrics to the song Xergiok sings as he regains his vision, flying birdback at sunset.

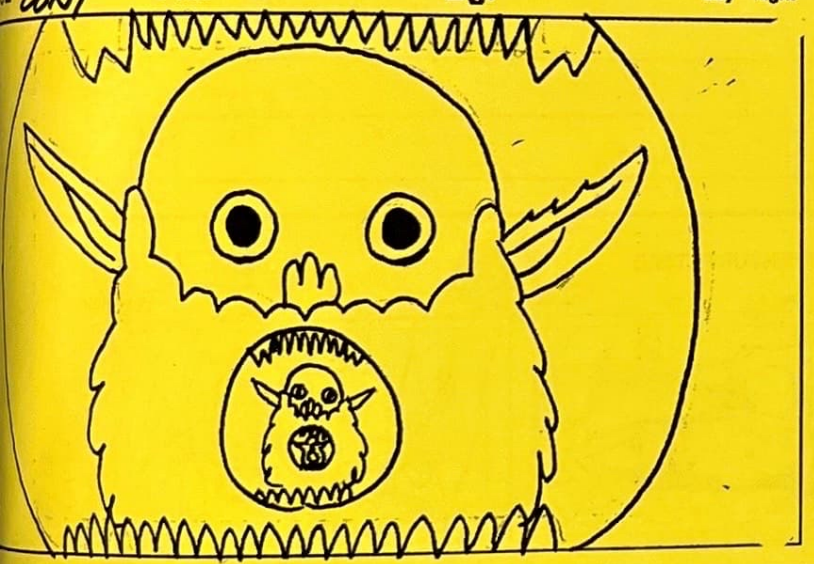


Far, far above,
Time standing still,
Memories are One,
Same space, same will.

Now move along,
Light speed divides,
Rips all from One,
It blows my eye-holes,
and fills me with real power,
Fills me with real power,
power power power power



62 CONT Pnl. E Bg. day night



Sc. 162 CONT Pnl. F Bg. day night





POWER

HEADS ANIM.
TWD Cam w/-

POWER

* Smallest HEAD

REV 2.0 2012

"THE GREAT BIRD MAN"

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 75 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 75 Pnl. B Bg.

S/A

Dialog:
(X) nice and cool down here, isn't it?
(X) FINN: SURE.
DETAIL (B) face
Action:
Xeyok walks out of cavern 2 versions
SEP 20 2012
Timing:
Production 1014/117
EPISODE # 1014-117
1014/117

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 76 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 76 CONT Pnl. B Bg.

Dialog:
Baby Birds (OS) Honk honk honk (like bicycle horns)
(X) Aha! listen to the babies!
Action:
SEP 20 2012
Timing:
Production 1014/117
EPISODE # 1014-117
1014/117

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 77 Pnl. A Bg. day night

Sc. 78 Pnl. A Bg.

Dialog:
(X) Nom Nom time!
b/ Honk Honk!
Action:
SEP 20 2012
Timing:
Production 1014/117
EPISODE # 1014-117
1014/117

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 78 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Sc. 79 Pnl. A Bg.

Dialog:
aw hey, that's cute
Action:
SEP 20 2012
Timing:
Production 1014/117
EPISODE # 1014-117
1014/117

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. 79 CONT Pnl. B Bg. day night

Sc. Pnl.

Dialog:
(X) (OS) there you go
Production 1014/117
EPISODE # 1014-117
1014/117

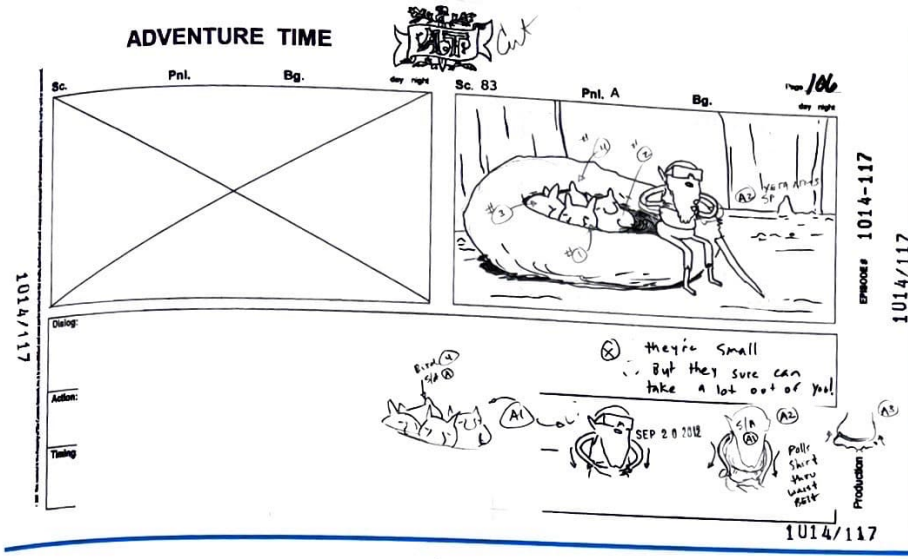
ADVENTURE TIME

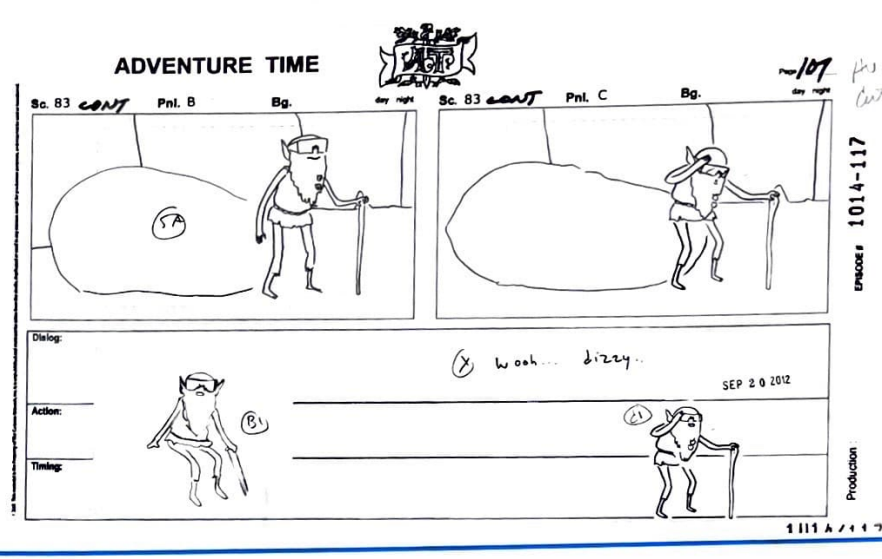
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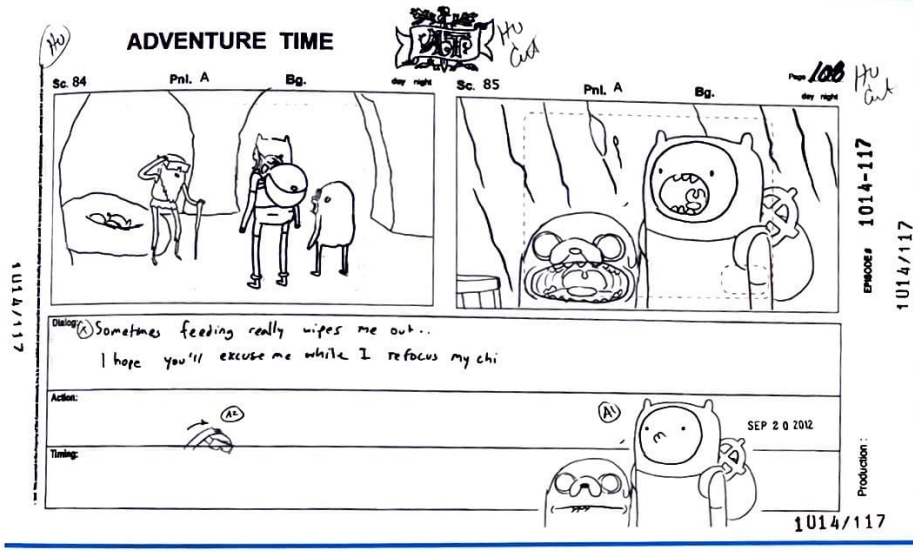
Sc. 80 Pnl. A Bg. day night

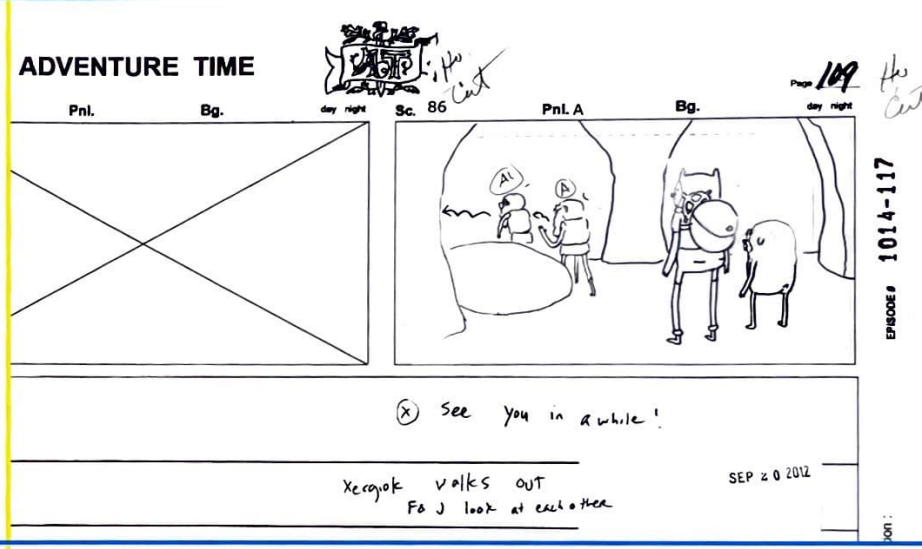
Sc. 81 Pnl. A Bg.

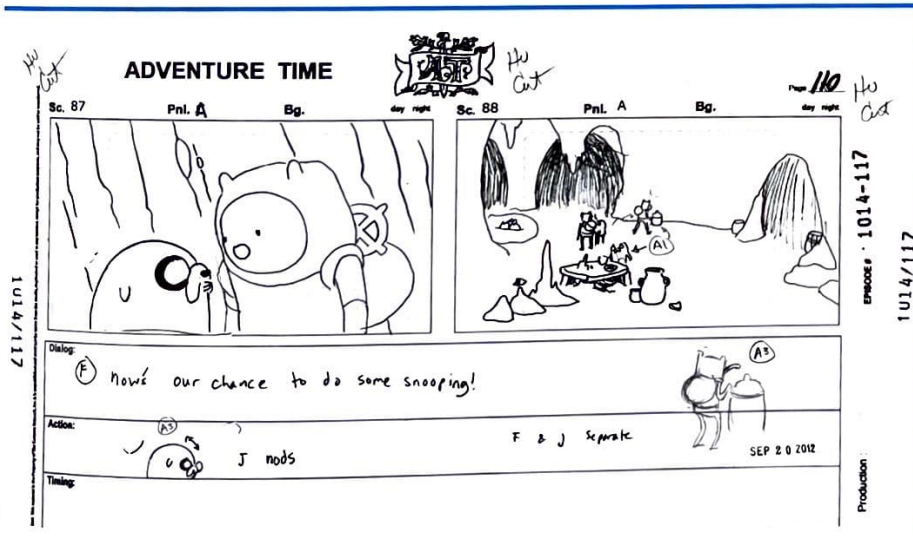
Dialog:
(X) little ones. Suckle Suckle.
Action:
SEP 20 2012
Timing:
Production 1014/117
EPISODE # 1014-117
1014/117







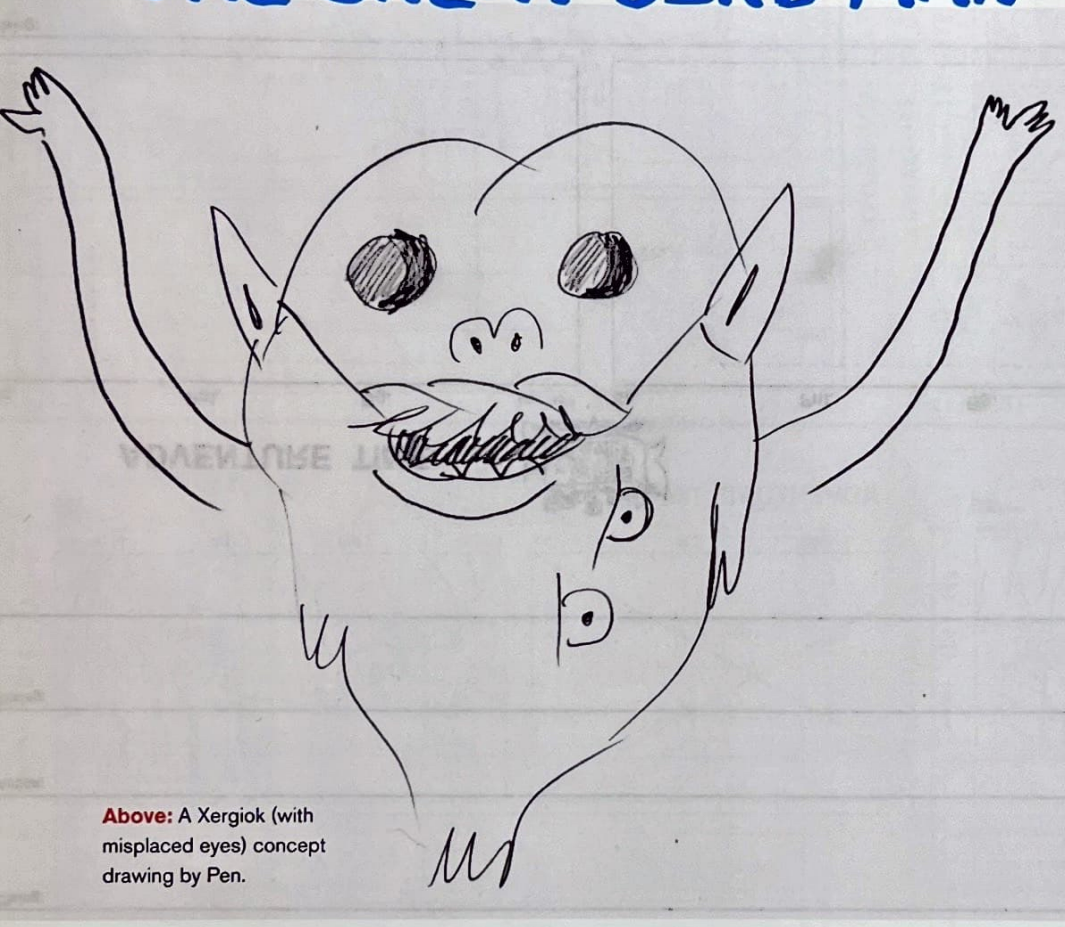




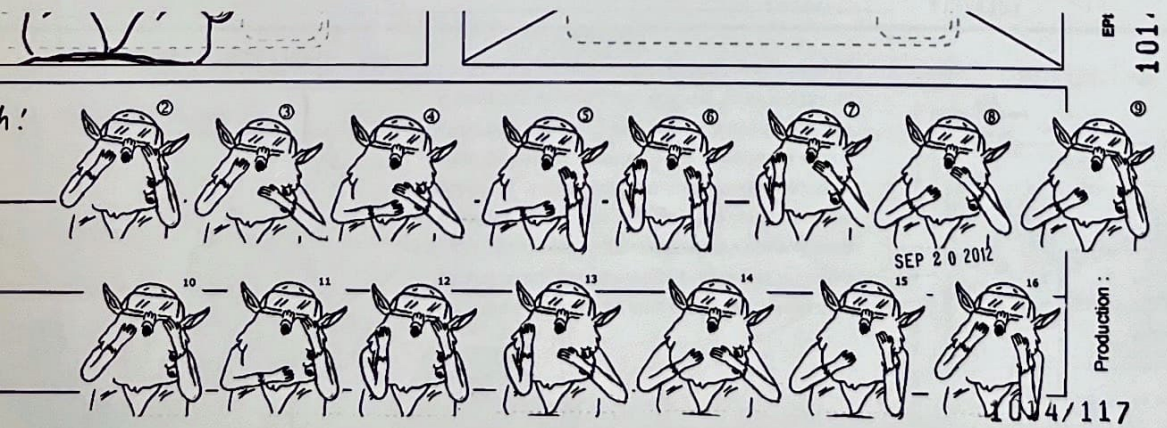
This spread: Storyboards by Ako Castuera. Since losing his eyes, Xergiok has transformed from a sadistic spanker to a gentle caretaker and has found a new purpose in life. Opposite, scene 80, panel A, depicts Xergiok nursing the chicks. This visual was ultimately cut. Still, the moment is satisfactorily bizarre and unsettling executed off-screen with just dialogue and sound effects to sell the action, as was broadcast in the final cartoon version.



"THE GREAT BIRD MAN"



Above: A Xergiok (with misplaced eyes) concept drawing by Pen.



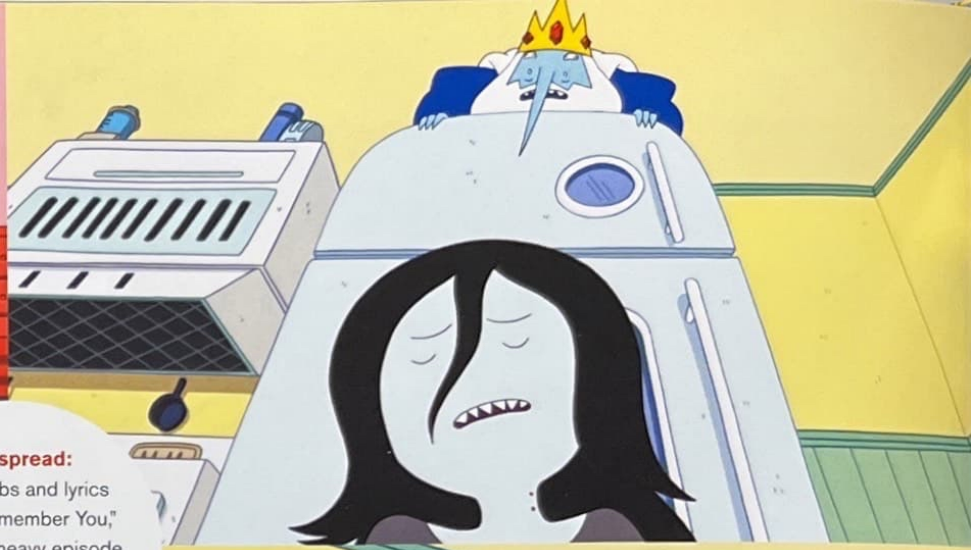




This page and left: "The Great Bird Man" stars the former ruler of the Goblin Kingdom and spanking enthusiast, Xergiok. This episode was storyboarded by Jesse Moynihan and Ako Castuera.

This spread:
Framegrabs and lyrics from "I Remember You," the music-heavy episode storyboarded by Rebecca Sugar and Cole Sanchez.









mon Petrikov Unearths
ncient Treasure

man returns from expedition with a
ginally exciting discovery.
ace Guese,
rsonnel in Standard

ONE
OR ANYONE
MUCH
ANYONE
Am



mon Petrikov delivers his latest find to the





(Continued from page 264)

Pat McHale: When we gave outlines to Rebecca, for example, we knew she liked to write music—and was great at it—so we'd try to include a place for that to happen. If there wasn't a place, she'd usually add something in anyway . . . just a song while the characters were traveling, or waiting, or whatever. Sometimes songs are added to make exposition more interesting, or just to make a potentially boring scene into something fun. Other times, particularly with Rebecca's and Jesse's songs, the songs have been used to give deeper insight into the characters' emotional depths.

Jesse Moynihan: I think musical moments should take the viewer by surprise almost. Like a thing that you didn't know was in you finding a voice.

A surprisingly emotional sequence in "I Remember You" is anchored around an Ice King–Marceline duet written by Sugar; the episode was boarded by Cole Sanchez and Sugar. Seeking to use Marceline's musical skills to write some hot new songs in order to impress princesses, Ice King dredges up old journals from his "the past room" to use as lyrics and barges uninvited into Marceline's cave house. Ice King is confused, doddering, physically inappropriate, and of course has no memory of his past—a typical state for him in his lonely ice cave. However, placed in the comfortable living room of Marceline's home, shooting ice bolts into the ceiling, sobbing in a heap on the floor, screaming for princesses, Ice King suddenly seems like Marceline's dementia-addled relative. As we find out, he is, in a way. Before his complete transformation into the Ice King, he was antiquarian Simon Petrikov, who found young Marceline alone and crying in the rubble after the war's devastation, and cared for her.

Rebecca Sugar: "I Remember You" was a totally different experience, because we all started out saying, "We want to do an Ice King/Marceline musical episode!" so the story came together with that in mind, and we were ready for it when we got it. We knew what we wanted to explain and which pieces of it would be through songs. Pen really pushed for the gravity of their history together, which I thought was amazing. I was really shocked that Ice King would try to kiss Marceline. That felt really extreme to me, but Pen really wanted to do it—he never pulled punches with that stuff, which was super inspiring. Boarding that one was wonderful, because Cole really identifies with Ice King, and I really identify with Marceline, so we worked on lyrics together, and it all poured out really naturally. The final song is like a collage of huge fears of mine . . . accidentally hurting someone, losing someone, losing yourself, trying to plan for a future over which you have no control, worrying like crazy that something might happen to the people you care about . . . Everybody worries about that stuff, right?

(Continued on page 276)

Marceline, is it just you
and me in the
wreckage of the world?
That must be so confusing
for a little girl
And I know you're going to
need me here with you
But I'm losing myself and
I'm afraid you're going to
lose me too
This magic keeps me alive,
but it's making me crazy
And I need to save you,
but who's going to save me?
Please forgive me for
whatever I do . . .
When I don't remember you

Composers: TIM KIEFER & CASEY BASICHIS

Tim Kiefer and Casey Basichis compose the eccentric, frenzied music for *Adventure Time*. Tim, on the creative approach he takes to composing: Oh man, having carte blanche creative license with this show is supremely inspiring. I've made beats out of rubbing on cardboard [Never-Ending Pie-Throwing Robot–related pieces], played guitar with a fur coat ["Hug Wolf"], taken Princess Bubblegum's on-again, off-again thematic instrument–steel drum–and all but made it molten to follow Goliad's mental meltdown . . . and that's only the tip of the iceberg. Without a doubt, the instrument in my studio that gets the most play is . . . the good ol' vocal cords. While often taking the form of gentle background texture, they've been frenzied kazoo melodies ["Dungeon"], layered to form an entire orchestral arrangement [the processional in "Apple Wedding"], and otherwise pitched and squished a bazillion different ways–listen closely in episodes like "The New Frontier" or "Beyond This Earthly Realm"!

Tim, on how many musical cues are required to be composed for an average episode: Two dozen or so. We've probably cleared 3,600 total by now!

Tim, on the specific considerations he must take to compose music for the show: The pacing of an eleven-minute cartoon episode is quite fast . . . breakneck, even. Moods can change in seconds, and the music is essential in helping convey those changes, so it needs to move just as quickly. For me, going from writing songs and scoring films to *Adventure Time* was kinda jolting, as I was used to more subtle mood shifts and gradual musical developments. I remember working on my first *Adventure Time* action piece–a collaboration with Casey for the meteor scene in "Wizard"–the two-and-a-half-minute cue had to seamlessly go through a dozen different intense moods. I was stumped. We went at it for *days*, making sure this section was sufficiently "lullaby *epic soft*" and that section felt "grizzly rock *Sailor Moon* mystical" enough.

Casey, on the nuances of timing the composition interplay with the dialogue and picture: The humor is often hinged on the timing of nuanced details. Everything is very discrete in animation, frozen in place until the exact frame that it leaps into motion. We need to examine how we want to hit or avoid those moments, but in doing so we create subdivisions that can skew the way the humor feels. The music and dialogue interact subliminally and different relationships can really shift the way the dialogue in a scene is understood. Composing for picture tends to change the context of your musical listening from a pure good vs. bad spectrum, to an associative process that is creative in itself–in what context *would* this music be perfect? A small moment of music will intuitively suggest a complex mix of associations–these elements that apparently exist as we sense them. I like to share the ones that really counterpoint the narrative flow. To me it's a process of sharing funny things that I discover, though we do then need to corral the elements to give each episode its own identity.



Left: Photo of composer Tim Kiefer in his home studio with some of his tools of the trade. Photo by Alexandra Mae Munson (Alexa Mae Photography).

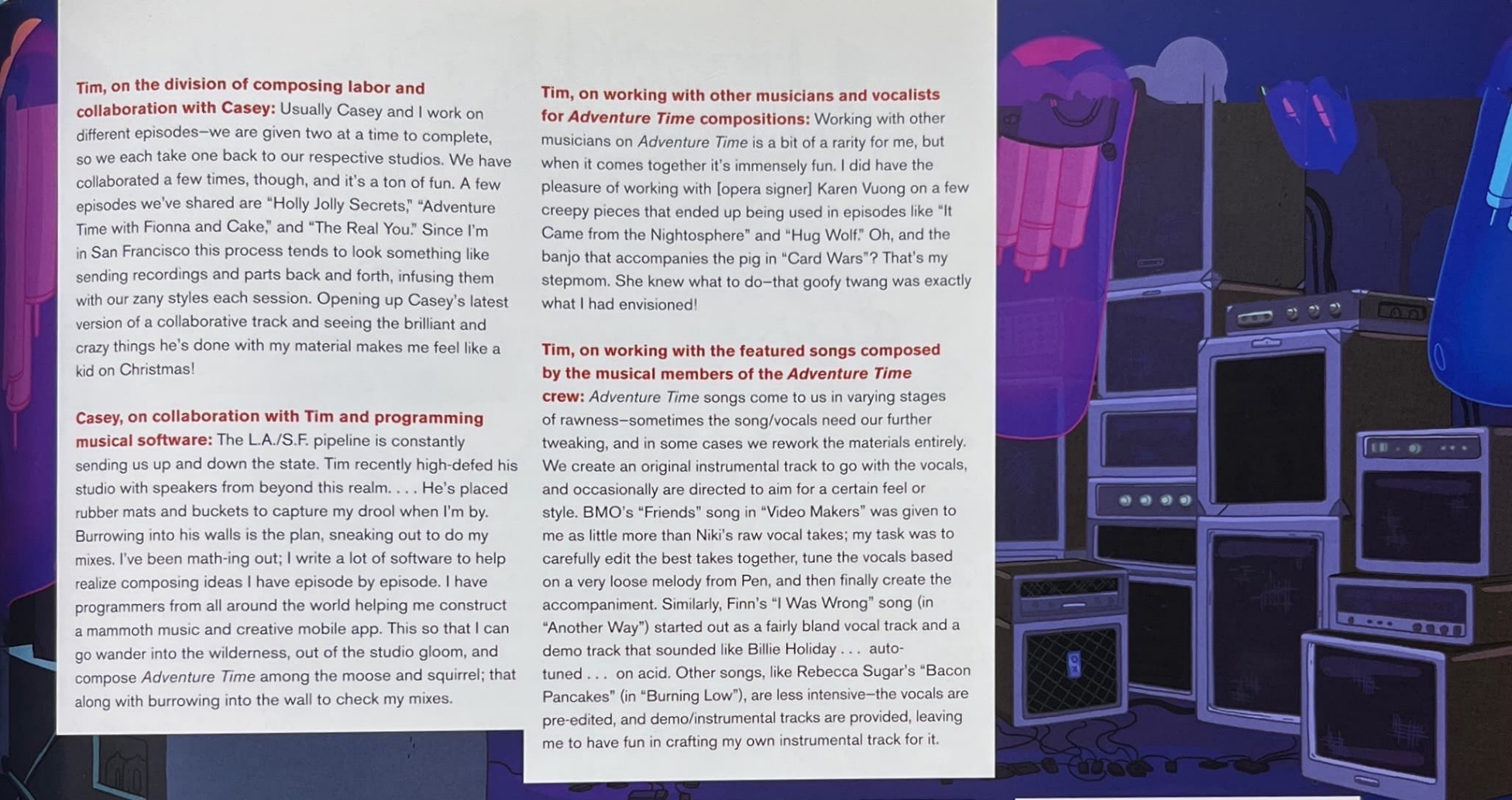
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Tim, on the division of composing labor and collaboration with Casey: Usually Casey and I work on different episodes–we are given two at a time to complete, so we each take one back to our respective studios. We have collaborated a few times, though, and it's a ton of fun. A few episodes we've shared are "Holly Jolly Secrets," "Adventure Time with Fionna and Cake," and "The Real You." Since I'm in San Francisco this process tends to look something like sending recordings and parts back and forth, infusing them with our zany styles each session. Opening up Casey's latest version of a collaborative track and seeing the brilliant and crazy things he's done with my material makes me feel like a kid on Christmas!

Casey, on collaboration with Tim and programming musical software: The L.A./S.F. pipeline is constantly sending us up and down the state. Tim recently high-defed his studio with speakers from beyond this realm. . . . He's placed rubber mats and buckets to capture my drool when I'm by. Burrowing into his walls is the plan, sneaking out to do my mixes. I've been math-ing out; I write a lot of software to help realize composing ideas I have episode by episode. I have programmers from all around the world helping me construct a mammoth music and creative mobile app. This so that I can go wander into the wilderness, out of the studio gloom, and compose *Adventure Time* among the moose and squirrel; that along with burrowing into the wall to check my mixes.

Tim, on working with other musicians and vocalists for *Adventure Time* compositions: Working with other musicians on *Adventure Time* is a bit of a rarity for me, but when it comes together it's immensely fun. I did have the pleasure of working with [opera signer] Karen Vuong on a few creepy pieces that ended up being used in episodes like "It Came from the Nightosphere" and "Hug Wolf." Oh, and the banjo that accompanies the pig in "Card Wars"? That's my stepmom. She knew what to do–that goofy twang was exactly what I had envisioned!

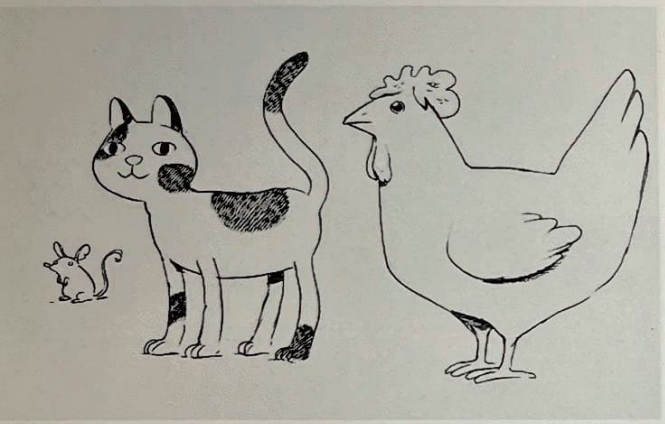
Tim, on working with the featured songs composed by the musical members of the *Adventure Time* crew: *Adventure Time* songs come to us in varying stages of rawness–sometimes the song/vocals need our further tweaking, and in some cases we rework the materials entirely. We create an original instrumental track to go with the vocals, and occasionally are directed to aim for a certain feel or style. BMO's "Friends" song in "Video Makers" was given to me as little more than Niki's raw vocal takes; my task was to carefully edit the best takes together, tune the vocals based on a very loose melody from Pen, and then finally create the accompaniment. Similarly, Finn's "I Was Wrong" song (in "Another Way") started out as a fairly bland vocal track and a demo track that sounded like Billie Holiday . . . auto-tuned . . . on acid. Other songs, like Rebecca Sugar's "Bacon Pancakes" (in "Burning Low"), are less intensive–the vocals are pre-edited, and demo/instrumental tracks are provided, leaving me to have fun in crafting my own instrumental track for it.





This spread: Background artwork (partially obscured) from "James Baxter the Horse," featuring various musical gear. This episode's backgrounds were designed by Santino Lascano and Derek Hunter, painted by Martin Ansolebehere, Sandra Calleros, and Ron Russell, and color styled by Catherine E. Simmonds.

Left: Photo of composer Casey Basichis. "The kind of spells this violin casts in my hands ooze Magic Man. . . . Wretched, searing squiggles–the kind no one wants. It's fun. It's a loaner."





This spread: A character sketch (above), a title card sketch (above right), and an unofficial promotional drawing (opposite), for the season four episode "BMO Noire" by Thomas Herpich, co-storyboarded by Skyler Page.

(Continued from page 273)

Providing the voice of Marceline is Olivia Olson, an actor with singing talent that elevates her performances to emotionally impressive levels.

Rebecca Sugar: It's really incredible hearing someone as talented as Olivia singing my songs. I would really try to push myself to hit notes I can't quite hit, and do little voice things I can't really do, knowing that Olivia would be able to make it sound good. I really try to act in the demos, and get the emotional ideas in there, since I know what the drawings will be and where the characters' heads are supposed to be at. . . . It's important to me that character arcs are happening within the songs, so I try to get that idea across in the demo as best as I can. The actors get the demos a little in advance, and the songs are recorded with the episodes, so there's not a lot of time. . . . I'd sit in with the actors sometimes and work on the songs with them and talk about how the characters are feeling or how I wanted certain rhythms to work.

An overarching concern throughout all of the writing and drawing and singing is maintaining a harmony with the show's "vibrations." One tenet of Pen's vision for the show is the celebration of quiet moments in which the characters simply exist, breathe, and experience each other's company and the world around them.

Jesse Moynihan: Sometimes I get very suspicious of "story" and pushing plot objectives over the small, specific moments. I don't know if I'll ever be at peace with those two things, but I've definitely learned something about clear storytelling from working on the show. Sometimes you ponder the age-old question of "Can we make an episode where nothing happens and still have it be entertaining?"

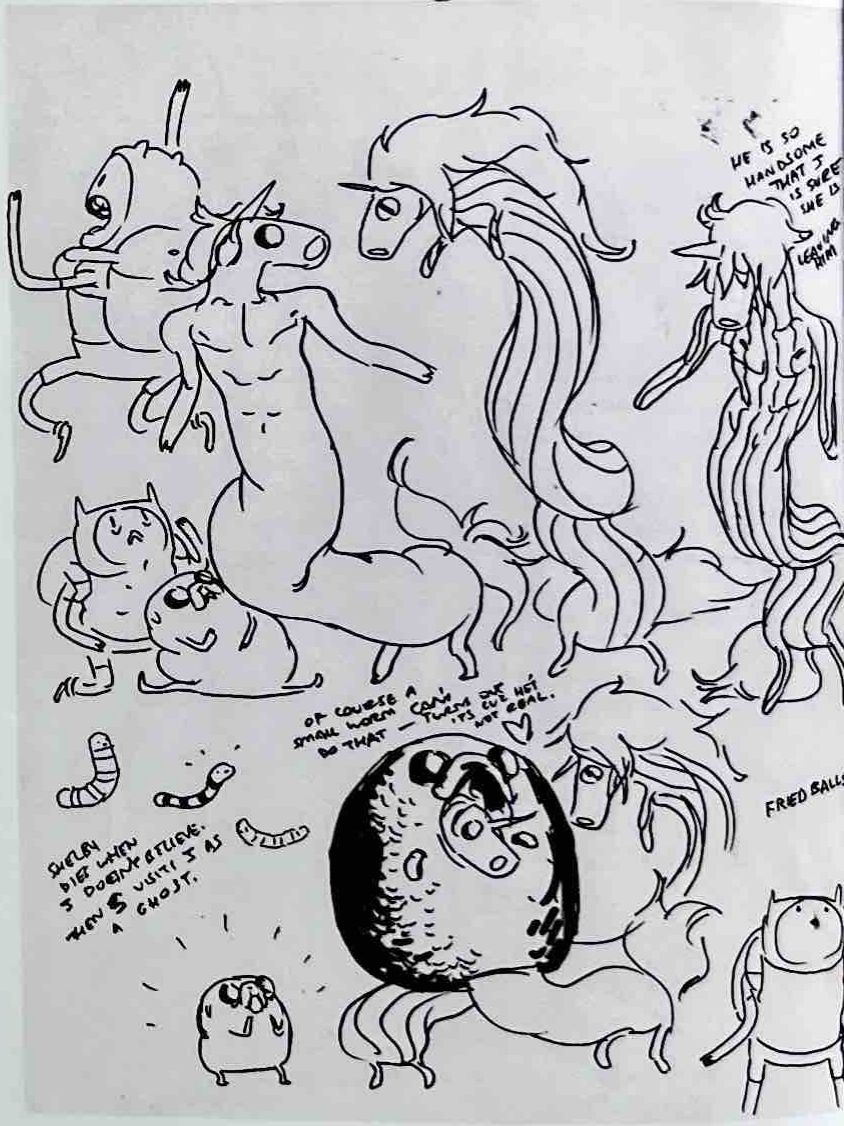
Maybe one key to the show's vibe is that the world exists with or without Finn and Jake. It keeps existing without the viewer. Things happen between episodes that aren't depicted. Characters already know each other before we've gotten to know them. If Finn and Jake had wandered left, they'd have a picnic, but instead they wandered right and Ice King is doing something stupid to someone. It's sort of like an MMO [massively multiplayer online] game, I guess, in that way.

Pen Ward: [The rules and logic of Ooo] were sort of inspired by Dungeons & Dragons. I treat the characters as real, and I treat the world as real. Who they are and their emotions . . . I'm really excited about the idea that these characters exist, and they're in this world. They're not fantasy. The world feels fantastic, but the characters are going to feel like they belong there.



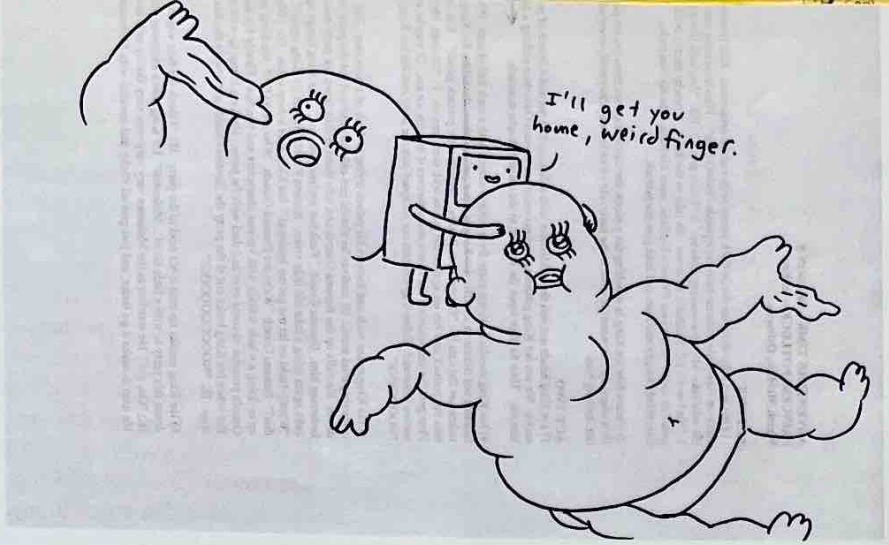


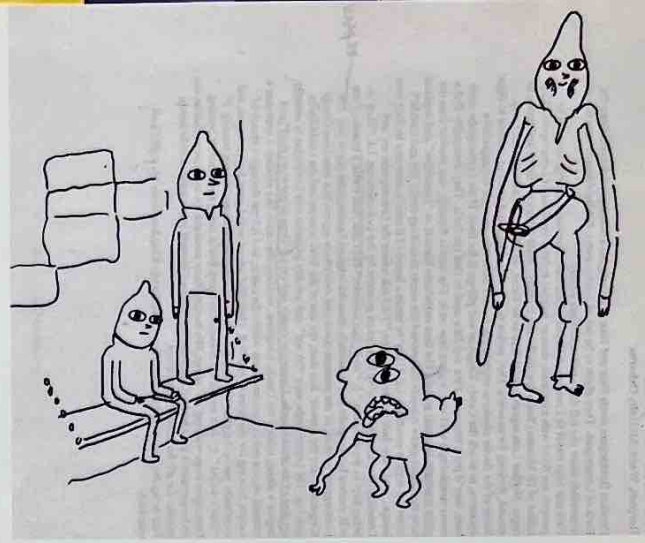




Above: Story meeting notes and drawings by Rebecca Sugar.

Opposite: Story meeting drawings by Pen.





[When writing the show], what I'm trying to do is to put myself into a fantastical cartoon world, and ask myself, "What would I do?"



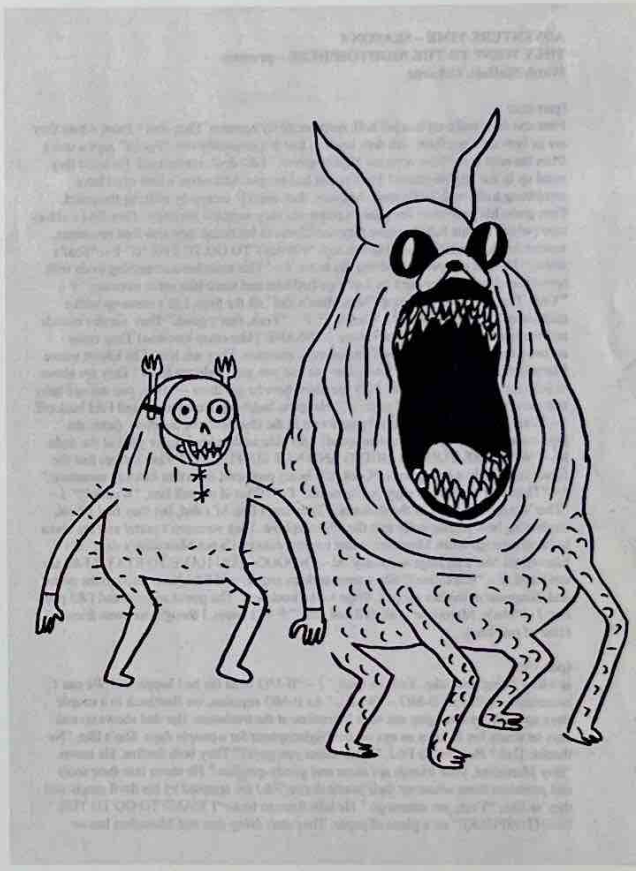
An instinctive gut-level understanding of the show's universe is required to produce new stories set in it. This is never more obvious to the crew than when they are searching to fill a vacant storyboarding position.

Jesse Moynihan: Tom [Herpich] and I sometimes talk about the "invisible rules" of *Adventure Time*. People from the outside often think that *Adventure Time*'s world-logic is completely open and lawless. There's no manual for what sort of writing works on the show, because I think it works sort of like a rubber band of taste. There's a lot of room to stretch, but there's also a lot of respect for a certain subtle, psychic understanding of what the show is. When a piece of writing "breaks the show," most of the creatives recognize it for some reason. I suspect this is because the hiring process includes a faith in the creative's intuition and sensitivity. The trick or twist of "getting" the show is to see the world and events of Ooo on a macro level and then filter it through your personal life journey, creative ambition, and aesthetic opinions.

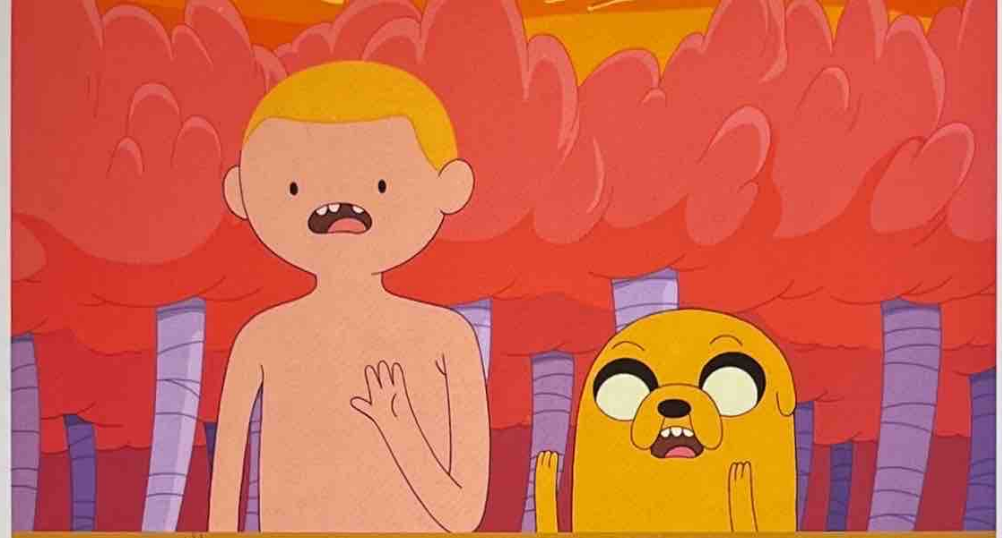
If you are going to make something, bring it to life, give it a story . . . then that thing has to come from a real and primordial place. The way I see the show is that it can incorporate multiple points of view, but those points of view need to be rich and confident. Some of it has to do with life experience. But I don't think you always need a rich and varied life to draw from if you can compensate with inventiveness and honesty.

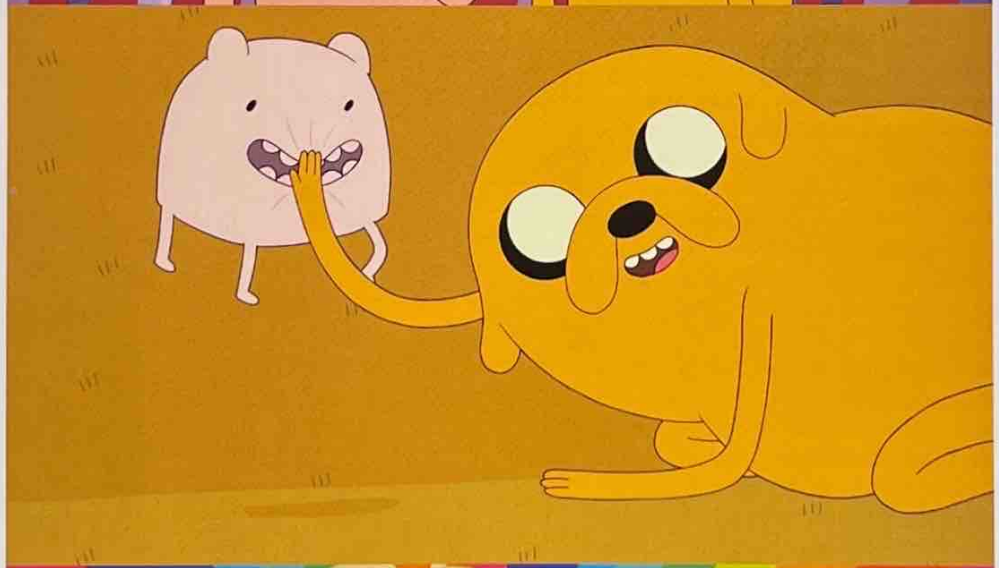
To me, that's why you have to look everywhere to find the right people for this show. They're hiding all around the world. Hopefully they have a Tumblr or something.

Proving this point, in an unusual intercontinental arrangement, Jesse partnered on multiple storyboards in season five with Münster, Germany–based cartoonist Thomas Wellmann. Other talent, such as Graham Falk, Sam Alden, Derek Ballard, Madéleine Flores, Luke Pearson, Michael DeForge, Brandon Graham, and Jillian Tamaki have remotely freelanced in storyboard work as well. Emily Partridge and Polly Guo have done freelance storyboard revisions, and David OReilly and Masaaki Yuasa have both written, boarded, and produced entire episodes with their own teams of artists.



Thomas Herpich: Doing something that's been done before is like a necessary-evil, last-resort sorta thing, at least in my conception of the invisible *Adventure Time* rules. And the easiest way to at least try to reinvent the wheel every time out is to draw from your own deep, honest perceptions of the world—give a



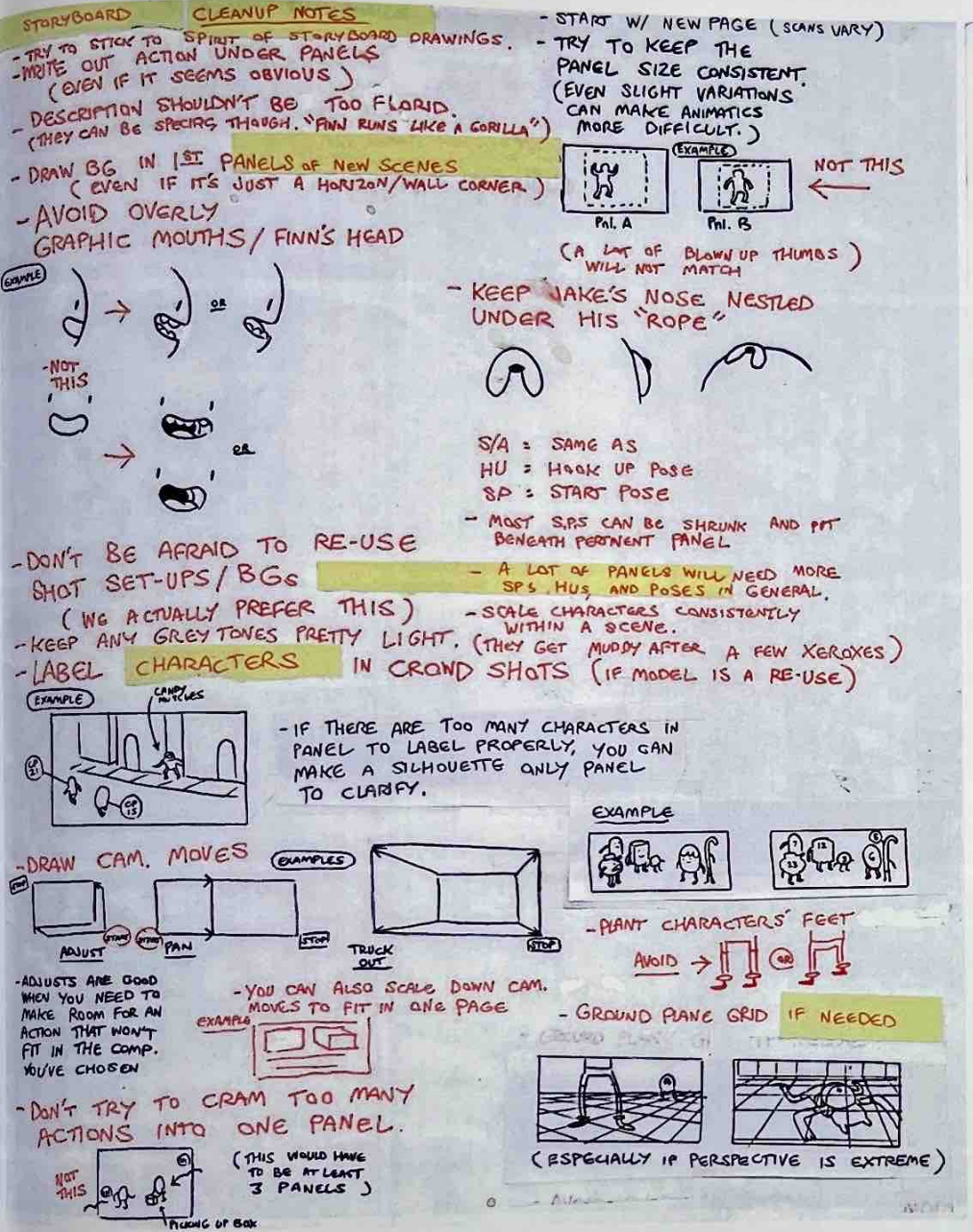


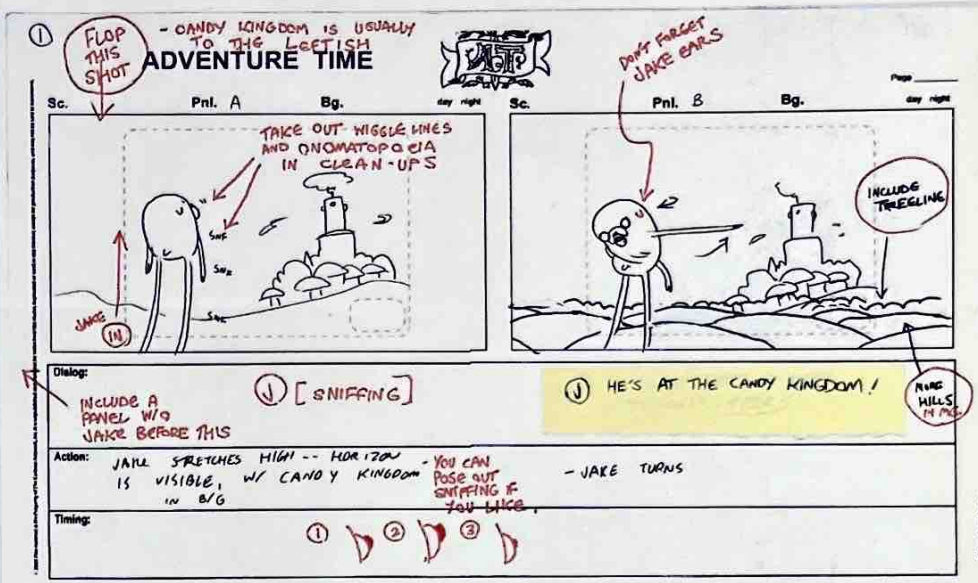


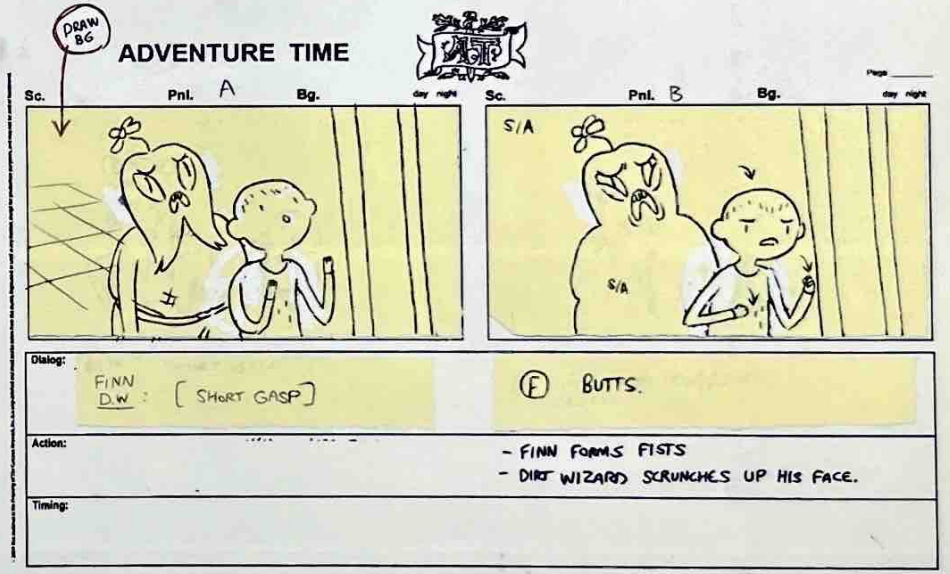
real firsthand account. Some people just constitutionally aren't interested in doing this, and some people aren't interested in *not* doing it—and those are the folks who'll be the best fit.

Ako Castuera: Many animator types have tunnel vision, and for all their skills, they lack a creative foundation that comes from other sources. They love animation for its own sake, which can create a blindness to clichés and standard, mediocre storytelling. A lot of people just love the way *Adventure Time* looks, so they watch and work through a lens where story is just a hanger for cool drawing. The results are weak boards, jokes that aren't funny, fake "acting" from the characters. Maybe it's worth mentioning that many storyboarding jobs don't require any writing on the artist's part; the writing is a totally separate job from the drawing. I think of myself as a drawing person who has learned to write. It's difficult enough to find people who can do both things, as well as possess the abstract qualities of personality that Tom and Jesse talk about. In addition, the people who meet these requirements also have to be willing to sacrifice nearly all their time to storyboarding. It's a job that can be really hard on your personal life and creative life; a handful of artists who were approached turned it down out of hand because they wanted to keep their time and their brains for their own work.

Pat McHale: Pen always talks about sincerity and heart. He likes real moments between characters. That doesn't mean like the lesson at the end of a *Full House* episode. It's like . . . actual, real human conversation. And that can be really hard to write sometimes. Plus you need to make it funny. Plus you need to be able to draw solid, funny drawings. Plus *Adventure Time* has this experimental and conceptual nature to it that is super hard to pin down and define. So when there's somebody who has all of those attributes, even if they live on the other side of the world, it's worth trying to get them on board.







Opposite: Scenes from "Little Dude," the episode about Finn's hat coming to life, storyboarded by Michael DeForge and Cole Sanchez.

This page: Two selections from a larger set of documents with notes from Adam Muto on thumbnail boards for "Little Dude," to apply during the clean-up storyboard process.

"DAD'S DUNGEON"



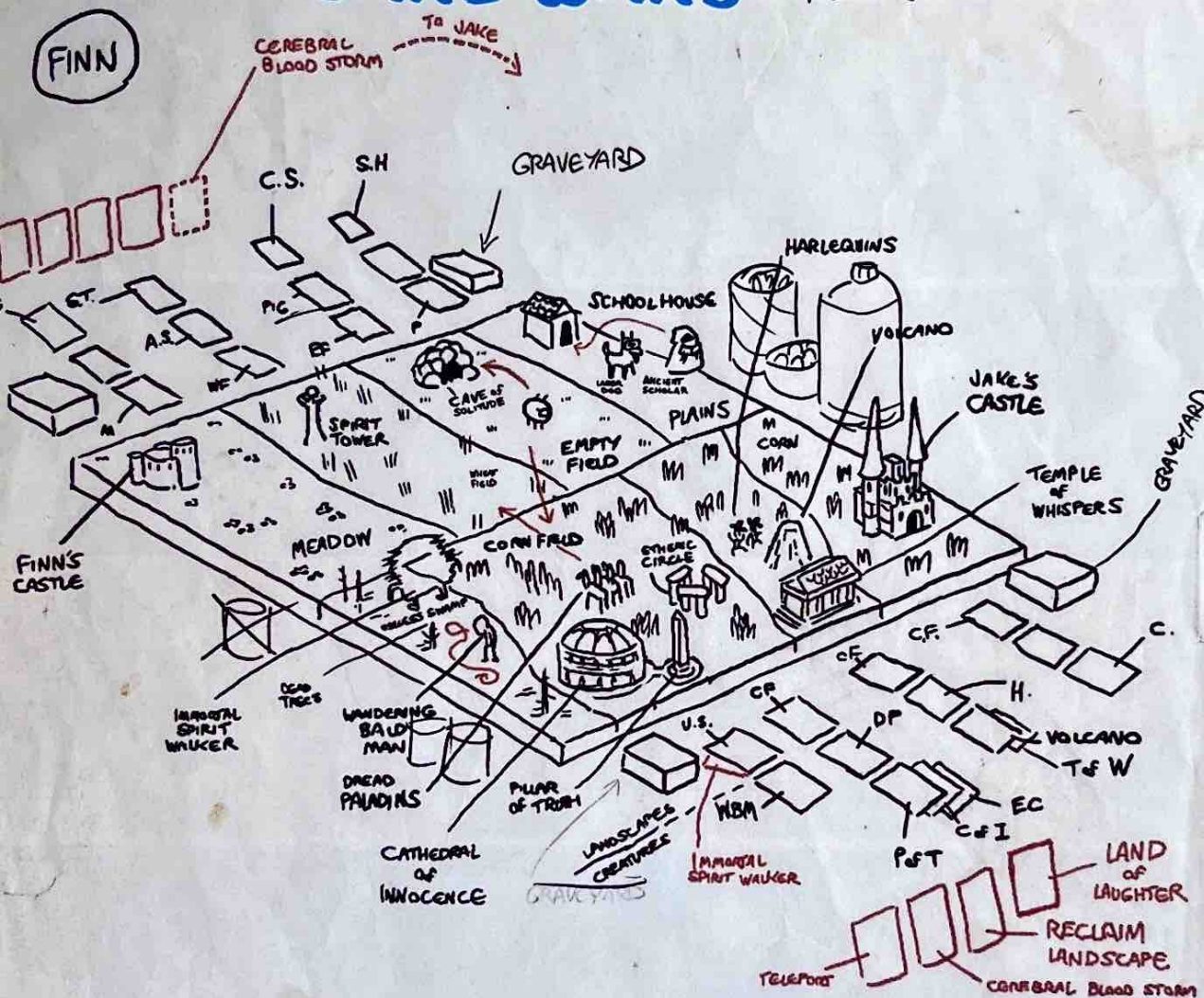
This spread: Framegrabs from "Dad's Dungeon," one of several dungeon crawls Finn and Jake face. Finn recovers Kee Oth's blood sword here.



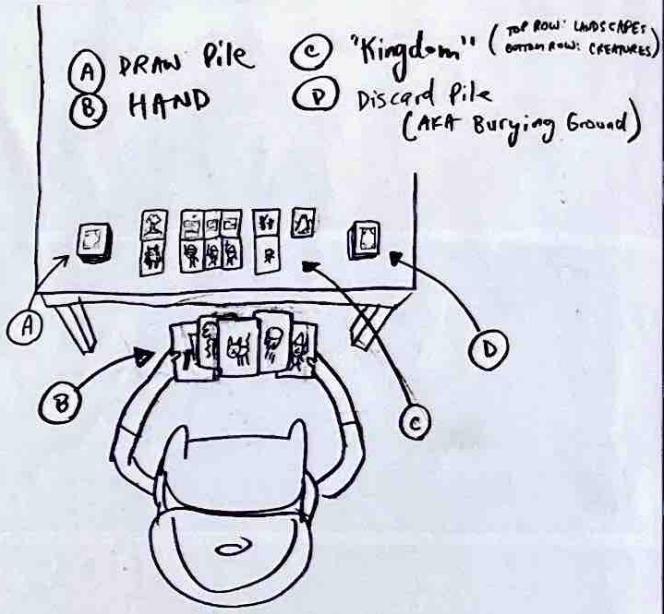
fig A

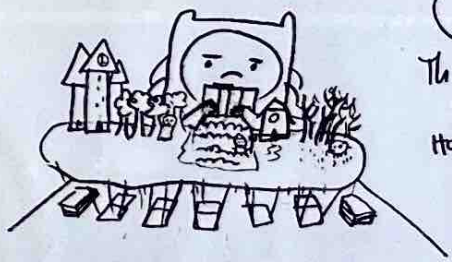
"CARD WARS"

PILLAR OF TRUTH

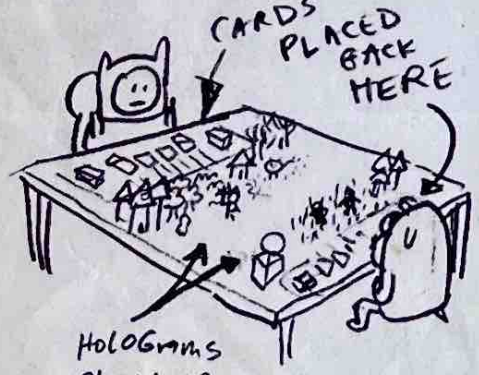


BASIC CARD LAYOUT





1 This is SORT OF How Pen was picturing it



JAKE

FLOOP

COUNTER CLOCKWISE

ACTIVATE

CLOCKWISE



2 HERES ANOTHER IDEA IT ITS EASIER.

Opposite: Television production schedules and budgets don't allow time to create extensive concept artwork the way that feature animated film schedules and budgets do, but some conceptual work gets sketched out during the story outline–writing stage. When the entire plot relies on their design, specifics do need to be figured out ahead of the storyboard phase, such as in the episode "Card Wars." Card Wars players fight to eliminate each other's creatures to win by strategically playing their cards and then watching the action unfold in hologram form on the board. Based on ideas by Pen, Pat McHale drew the two drawings on the right and the sketch on the bottom left, and Adam Muto refined the board game layout in the upper left drawing.

Right: Stills from "Card Wars" in which Jake reveals a new side of himself: that he is a poor sport when losing to a novice player at his favorite role-playing board game. This episode was storyboarded by Somvilay Xayaphone and Bert Youn.



IDEAS TO SCREEN

An episode idea is written into a one-page outline with three acts and specific story beats by the writers. A storyboard artist takes the outline, formulates ideas to further flesh out the story (**A**), then begins to create rough thumbnail storyboards (**B**). The completed rough boards are pitched to the rest of the crew, revised, and repitched until approved. The rough storyboards are then redrawn by the board artist at a larger size with greater detail and clarity. These are the final storyboards (**C**) that are shipped to the animation production studio. The animation is then produced (**D**) based off of the storyboards.

A

IK - I'M SO GLAD YOU GUYS ARE REAL! REALLY REAL?

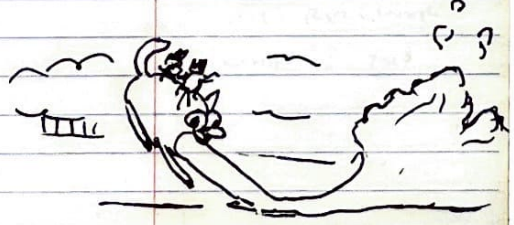
IK CRIES INTO HIS MACARONI. I WANT TO REMEMBER THIS DAY FOREVER!

F+C - AWOOOO DON'T GO! DON'T BE SAD!

C - I KNOW WHAT SPACE ADVENTURE WOULD CHEER HIM UP!

F+C ALL: A SPACE ADVENTURE!

THEY HOP ON CAKE AND BLAST OFF INTO THE COSMOS.



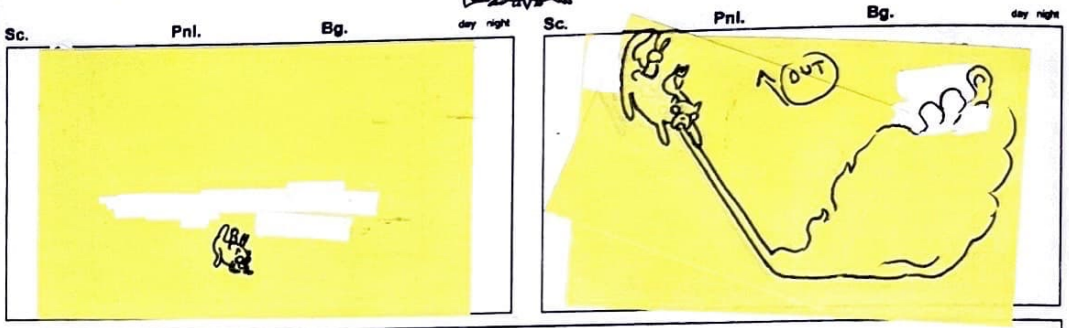
B

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. Pnl. Bg. day night

Sc. Pnl. Bg. day night

Page



Dialog:

(F) HERE WE GO!

(CAKE BLASTS OFF)

Action:

Timing:

EPISODE #

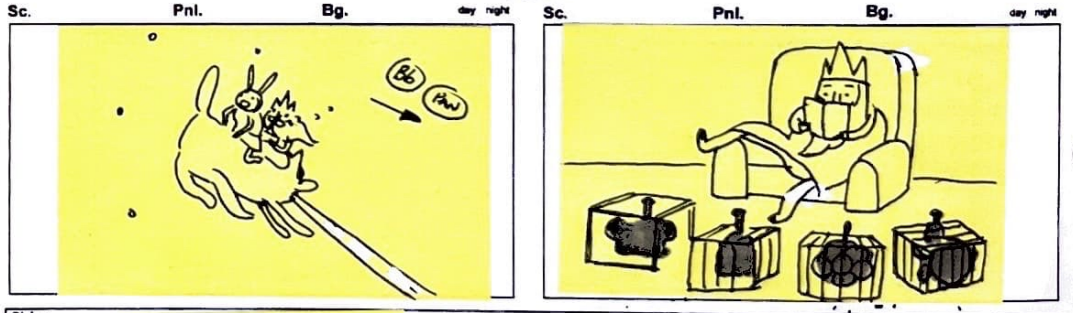
Production :

ADVENTURE TIME

Sc. Pnl. Bg. day night

Sc. Pnl. Bg. day night

Page



Dialog:

SP- STOP! ICE KING, THIS STORY IS HORRIBLE.

Action:

Timing:

EPISODE #

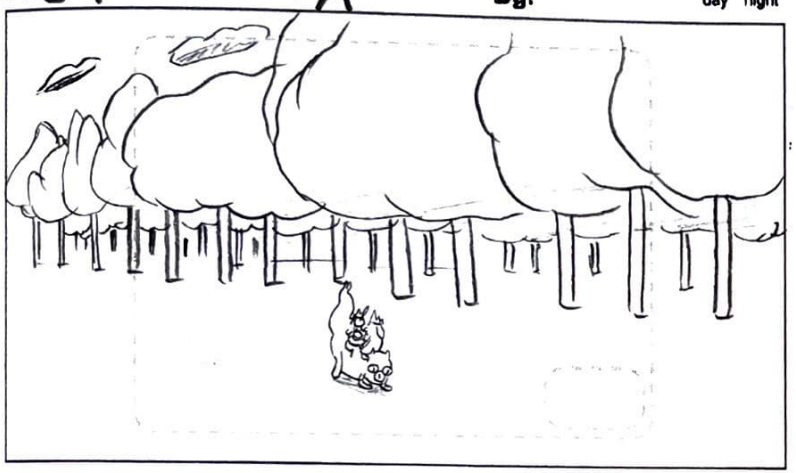
Production

This spread: Notes, rough thumbnails, final storyboards, and frames from Cole Sanchez's portion of the episode "Bad Little Boy."

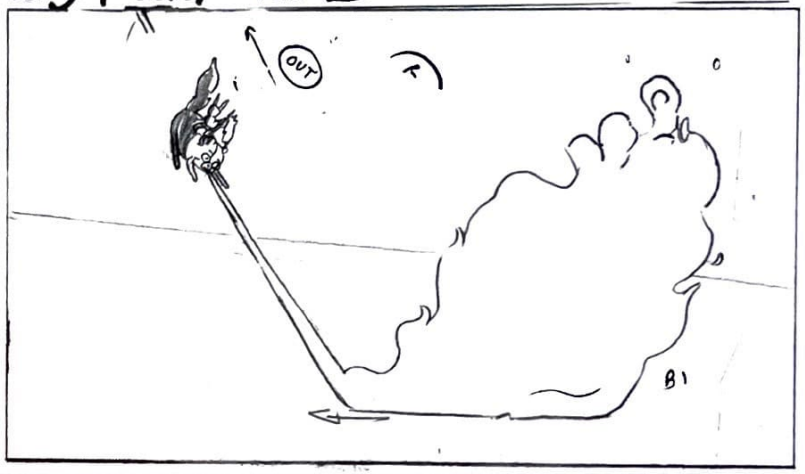
C **ADVENTURE TIME**

Page 42

Sc. 34 Pnl. A Bg. day night



Sc. 34 cont Pnl. B Bg. day night

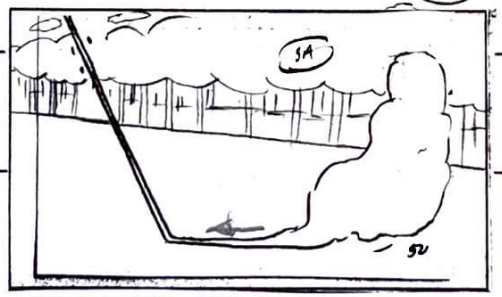


Dialog:

F HERE WE

Action:

Timing:



60 /

JUL 19 2012

< CAKE BLASTS OFF LIKE A ROCKET>

< SMOKE BLOWS AWAY >



1014/110

EPISODE # 1014-110

Production :

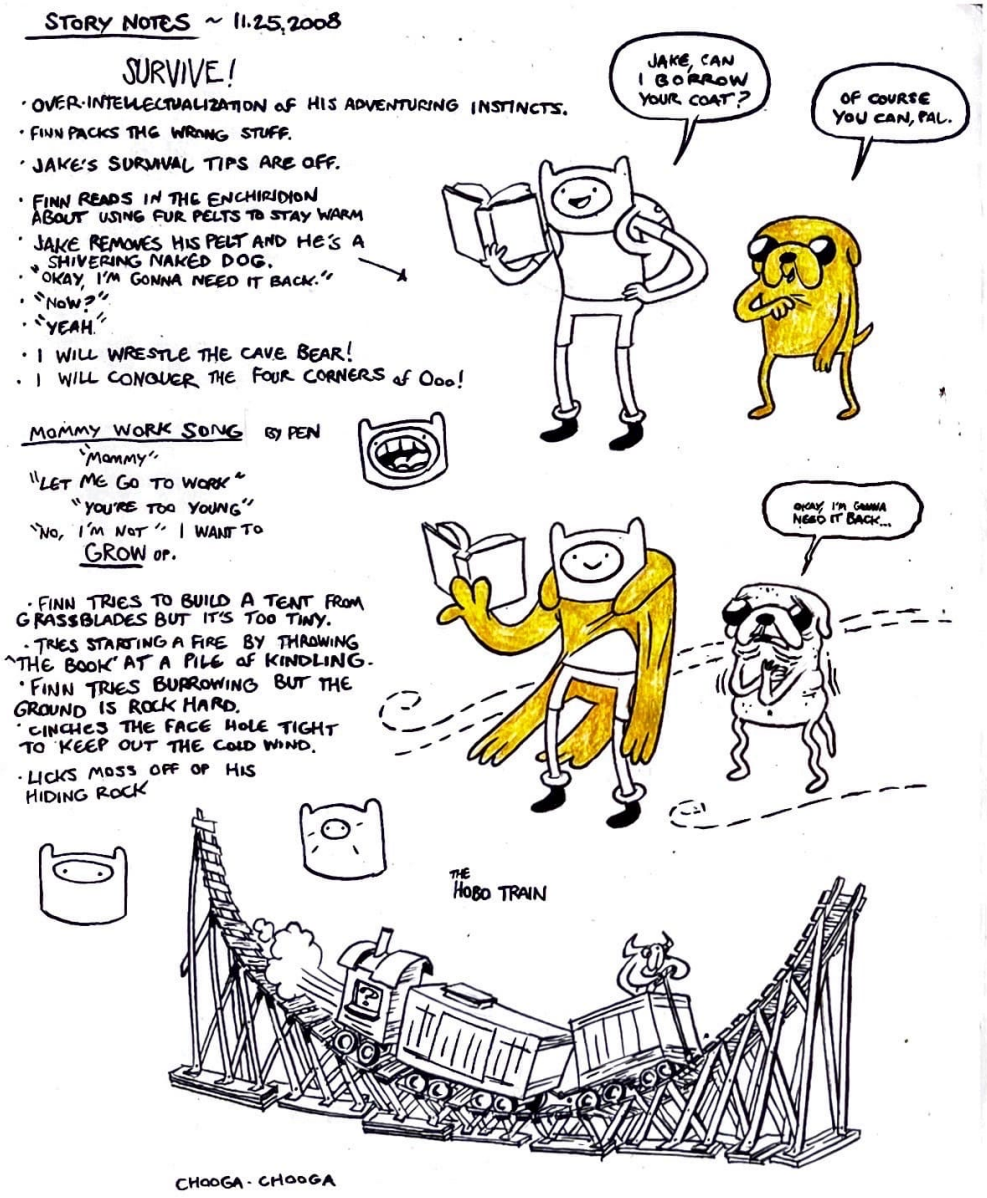
1014/110

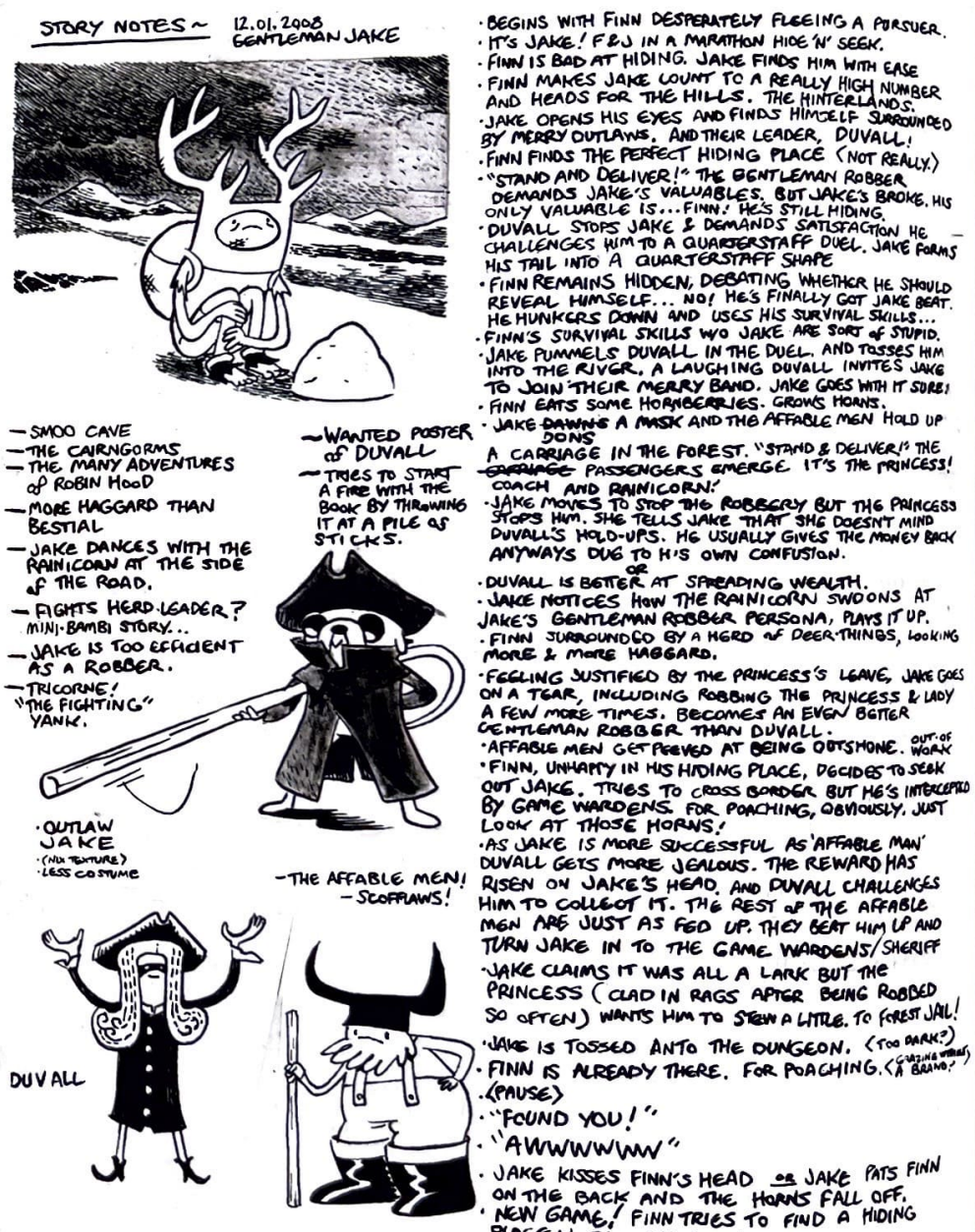




STORY NOTES

Adventure Time's storytelling possibilities seem limitless, but each story is anchored by the world's logic and rules that were established by the crew before the first episode premiered. These story notes from Adam Muto were made early in season one production, 2008–2009, and illustrate both story and world-logic possibilities that were used or discarded. Jake, for example, cannot remove his fur coat.

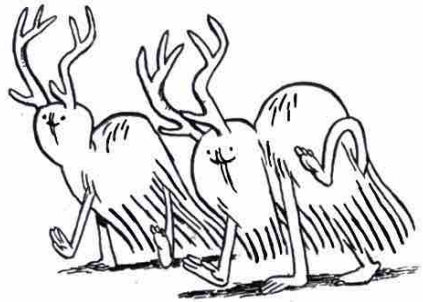




STORY NOTES ~ 12.01.2008
GENTLEMAN JAKE

- FINN COULD GET POACHED BY THE MERRYMEN TRUSSED UP AND BROUGHT TO THEIR HIDEOUT
- THEY FRAME JAKE BY PLANTING THE FINN-BEAST ON HIM & TURNING HIM OVER TO THE SHERIFF'S MEN/ PRINCESS'S SOLDIERS.
- JAKE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE WOOLY FINN OR FINN IS HOODED/ UNRECOGNIZEABLE BECAUSE of ANGLES? SOUND/GAGGED. OR
- RESCUE of MAID MARIAN SEQUENCE WITH FINN IN PLACE of JAKE
- SOLID ROCK/ LAVA MAN or ELEMENTAL.
- PLAY UP SERIOUS CONVERSATION.

FINNTELOPE

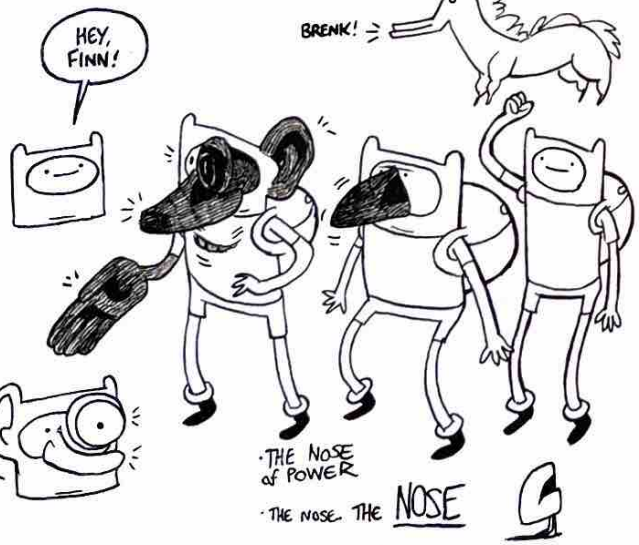


- SEQUENCE of ICE KING HAVING AN INNER MONOLOGUE WITHIN HIMSELF.
- ZOMBIE WELL ~
- RETHINK BIRD STORY/ BIRDHOUSE.
- TRYING TO REMOVE NOSE/ FINDING THE WORST THING IN THE WORLD.
- ORDER of MAGIC-FACE-OBJECTS.
- FIVE DEADLY SENSES
- THE ULTRA-CLEAN AMBASSADOR
- BERRY STAND.
- FAERIE FRUIT/ HORSHOUND

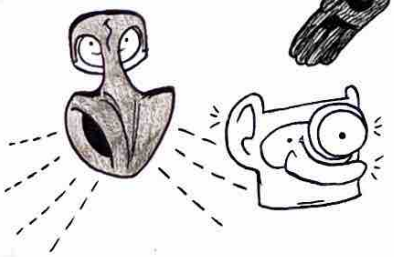


- THE FURRY WARBLEKIN BEAST- FINN

ICE KING JAIL - REVISIONS



- THORAGON'S HELMET



- THE NOSE of POWER
- THE NOSE THE NOSE

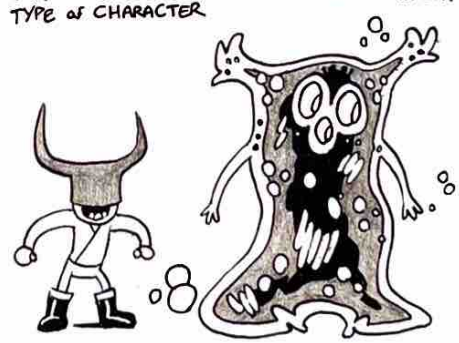
STORY NOTES ~ 12.15.2008
"GENTLEMAN JAKE"



- DEER THINGS RUB UP AGAINST FINN & TRANSFER FUR.
- OR NO ANTLERS AT ALL
- FINN COULD WEAR A BASIL RATHBONE SHERIFF GET UP.

- SEPERATE INTO 2 STORIES TO STREAMLINE
- HIDE 'N' GO SEEK EPISODE
- BARON of THE FOREST/WOODS ROBIN HOOD EPISODE. HIDE & GO SEEK
- FINN GOES A GREAT DISTANCE TO FIND A SWEET HIDING PLACE.
- JAKE IS STUCK AT THE COUNTING PLACE.
- DETAINED (A LA THE KILLERS)
- OLLY OLLY OXEN FREE
- FOOT IS GROWN OVER BY TREE.
- SURVIVAL ANTICS WITH FINN. BECOMES A FUGUE WILD MAN.
- VIRTUAL REALITY.
- THEIR PROBLEMS ARE REAL.

- BARON of THE WOODS CAN BE A 'GREEN KNIGHT' TYPE of CHARACTER



'THE SPACE VIRUS'

- ADVENTURE-TIME CONTINUUM VENUE FOR LINCOLN/JAKE'S DEATH VISION. POSSIBLY.
- 3-HOUR TIME TRAVEL



This spread: Adam Muto's extensive, illustrated story notes from early in season one production, 2008–2009.

STORY NOTES

STORY NOTES ~ 01.13.09

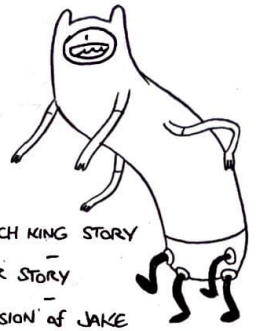
NEXT! ON ADVENTURE TIME!...

NEXT OUTLINE...

- [x] GENTLEMAN JAKE
- [x] VR
- [x] OLD MAN AND HIS DIAMONDS
- [x] RAINICORNS/ PRISMS
- [x] FINN & THE THIEF (DELL)
- [x] APPLE THIEF... THIEFTHIEFTHIEF
- [ ] ONE HOT WORM
- [x] THE VISION of JAKE/ LINCOLN

·MUSICAL VILLAIN?
·COLOR KIDD!

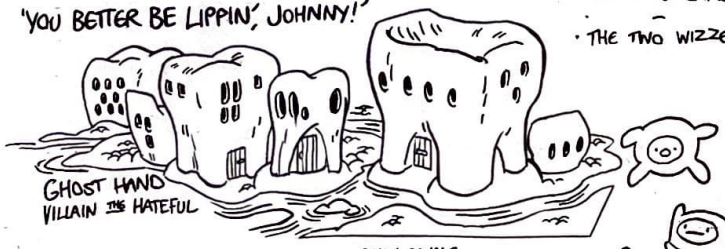
ARNIE MORTON
3400 W. OLIVE
ALAMEDA @7



· LICH KING STORY
· VR STORY
· VISION of JAKE
· THE TWO WIZZERS

SYMPATHETICAL POWDER!

'YOU BETTER BE LIPPIN', JOHNNY!'



GHOST HAND
VILLAIN THE HATEFUL

SALIVA CANALS

HELMET of THORAGON STORYPACK

·TRACK MOMENTS WHEN FINN IS OBVIOUSLY MISSING OUT ON SOMETHING COOL
·OVERACHIEVER NOTE

"DON'T BREAK THE COOKIES"





WHAT AM I

·DIFFERENT INCARNATIONS of FINN APPEAR IN JAKE'S VISION.

JAKE
↳THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

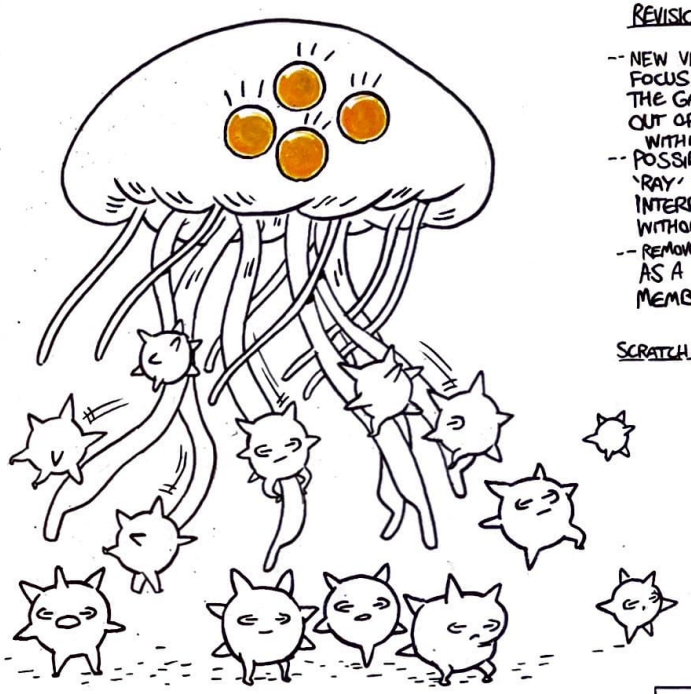


HOW ADAM RUINED PAT'S DRAWING.

STORY NOTES ~ 1.13.09

VR^

OUR MUTUAL VREALITY

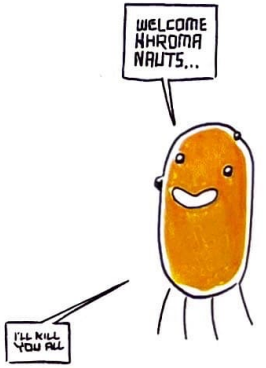


REVISION NOTES

-- NEW VR BEATS SHOULD FOCUS ON JAKE ENTERING THE GAME TO GET FINN OUT OF IT. BULK of EPISODE WITHIN GAME?
-- POSSIBLY USE UPDATED 'RAY' TO ALLOW JAKE TO INTERFACE WITH GAME WITHOUT 2ND PAIR of GOGGLES.
-- REMOVE ELEMENT of JAKE AS A CONCERNED FAMILY MEMBER/ INTERVENTIONIST.

SCRATCH THIS LINE OF THOUGHT.

KHROMANAUTS!
FRIED EGG METROIDS!



This spread: Early story notes from Adam Muto, which include kernels of future stories and musings on a very different possible Lich personality.

STORY NOTES ~ 01. 21. 09.

..ICE KING · OUTCAST
~~GRIMMORE~~
..LICH KING · NUTCRAT FANATIC
·½ of MARCELINE · WITCHY WOMAN
·RICARDIO · THE DEVIL
·BIG HANDS · OUTCAST
·GRAYWHACK (RE:NAME?) · GREED AMBITION
·THE MAGIC MAN

"ADVENTURE TIME NEEDS MORE VILLAINS!"

POSSIBLE VILLAINS

. ONE of THE WINDS (THE NOR'WESTER)
·FINN'S RIVAL
· BABA YAGA TYPE VILLAIN.
. USURPING SERVANT (MUGGLEBUB)
·PRETENDER/FALSE HERO
·FINN'S 'BOGLIN'



·FINN'S HAT IS THE KEY TO PREVENTING A MENACE TO BE RELEASED (SIGNIFICANCE)
·FINN'S HAT IS STOLEN FOR A MUNDANE REASON (THE ICE KING, SICK of HAVING HIS CROWN KNOCKED OFF

"I'LL NEVER GET USED TO HAVING SUCH INCREDIBLE POWER."



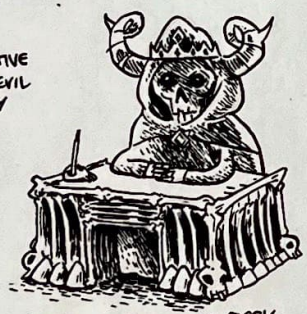


..DRIVEN BY GREED, NEUROSES, CONVICTION of A JUST CAUSE
..DRIVES SHOULD BE SIMILAR TO F&J AT THE CORE.

..LICH KING AS A DARK KNIGHT SERVING A WARPED SENSE of ORDER/AGAINST SILLINESS

..ALL-POWERFUL, UNIMAGINATIVE BUREAUCRAT INSTEAD of A BROODING DARK PRINCE
~MING THE MERCILESS' BIG TRAIN SKETCH
'LAST MUSKETEER' BY JASON

·BORED AND UNCREATIVE
·ORDERS ACTS of EVIL TO FEEL THE TINY SADISTIC THRILL.



*DON'T LITERALLY USE DESK. THINK of 'KING CONAN' SCENE



STORY NOTES ~ 01.27.09

FROM THE DESK of THE LICH KING

LICH KING

- RUN AFOUL of HIS DOMINION
- FOIL A PLOT/STUMBLE UPON
- CAPTURED BY MINIONS/GOONS
- DESTROYS THE SEAL
- HAS TO PLEAD WITH THE LICH KING
- PROTOCOL CHALLENGE
- WAGER (PLAYING ON LICH KING'S BOREDOM

..ZOMBIE WELL
·JAKE IS TRANSFORMED INTO A ZOMBIE

- CEREBRAL VILLAIN DEFEATED BY UNPREDICABLE ANTICS of FINN & JAKE
- MORE BEMUSED MACHIAVELLIAN THAN RANTING ICE KING
- BEURO CRAT
- CAPTURES JAKE
- CAPTURES



·ABANDONED SUBWAY STATION/CATACOMBS

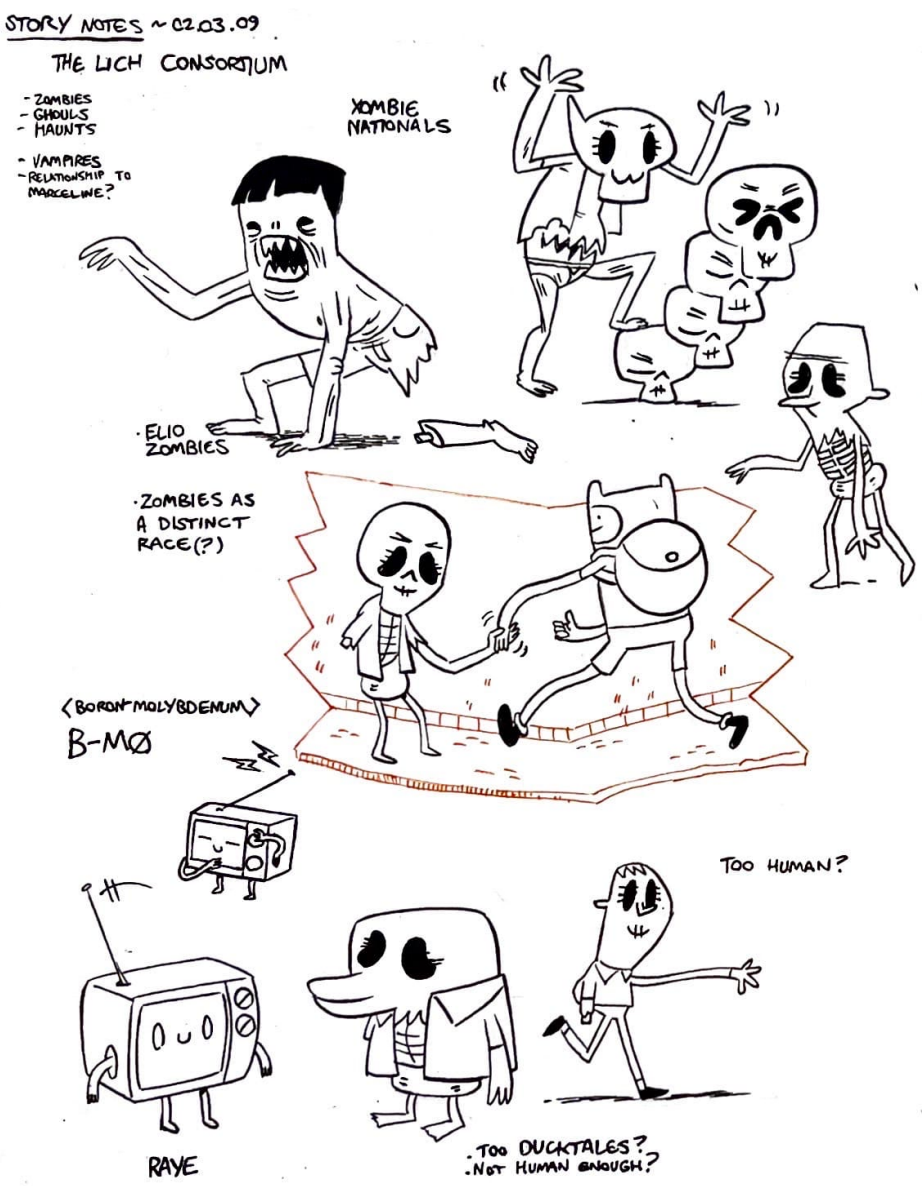
THE THRONE of LADDERS

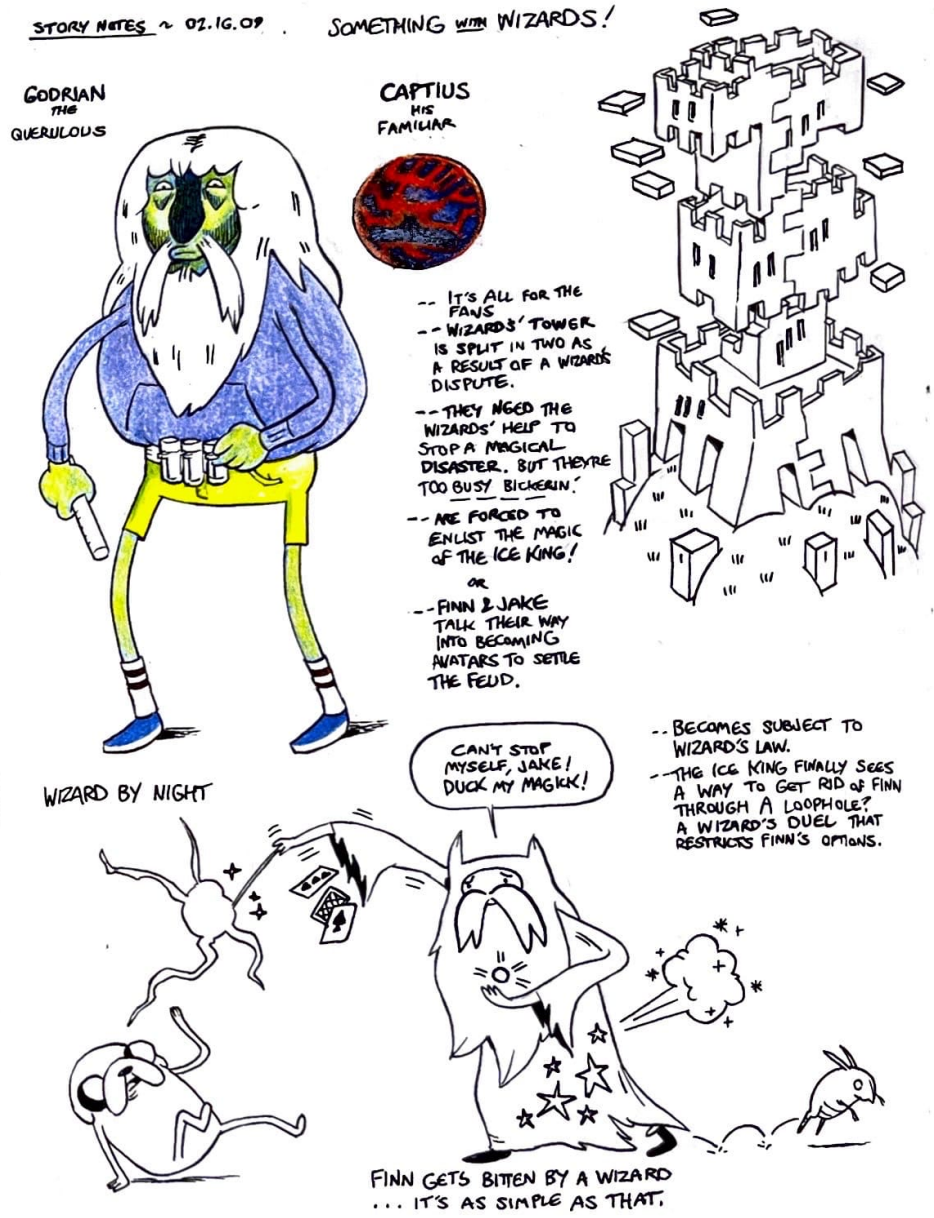




*AFTER ELIO

STORY NOTES





This spread: Early story notes from Adam Muto, including themes of zombies, Finn gaining wizard powers, and a city of thieves, all of which were developed into season one episodes.

STORY NOTES ~ 02.18.09

CITY of THIEVES

MOONLIGHT

- CITY SHOULD BE HIDDEN (UNDERGROUND. TOO OBVIOUS)
- MADE of PLUNDER?
- AVOID PIRATE IMAGERY...
- MADE of SAILS?
- FLOATING CITY?
- LOW PROFILE

TENTS

DAGGER

SHORT PRISONER STYLE CAPE

- CRIME WAVE!
- FINN'S HAT IS STOLEN ONE NIGHT BY GIRL THIEF
- THE NEXT MORNING FINN REVEALS HIS LONG GORGEOUS HAIR! FINN TIES IT AROUND HIM AS ARMOR.
- TRACKS GIRL THIEF BACK TO THE CITY of THIEVES.
- GRL/THEF HAS A PROBLEM.
- F/J HELP HER / SHE HELPS THEM ROB BACK THE PROPERTY of OOO. FROM THE THIEVES (JUSTIFIABLE)
- ENFORCERS FIND THE CITY, ARE FORCED TO FIGHT ON BEHALF of THE THIEVES (OLD CHARACTERS)
- FINAL MOMENT W/ GIRL THIEF.

—TOO MUCH LIKE MARCELINE?

TOO FIN ALF ANT ASY

WHAT ARE YOU DOING

WATER-BLOBS

STORY NOTES ~ 02.19.09

THE LICH KING

~ MARCELINE STORY?

SIMPLIFY SIMPLIFY SIMPLIFY

- HOW TO HANDLE ZOMBIES / STAY MINDLESS
- EXPEDITIONARY FORCE COULD BE SKELETON WARRIORS (OR)
- TRICK SKELETONS INTO POSTPONING ATTACK
- BRING FINN BACK TO MEET WITH THE LICH KING. (AS PRISONERS/FAKE DIPLOMATS) (OR)
- ITEM of POWER COMES INTO F/J POSSESSION. LICH KING'S FORCES COME CALLING.

- FINN & JAKE BEAT UP SOME ROGUE SKELETONS WHO ARE TEARING UP OOO (OR)
- INTERROGATION LEADS F/J TO THE LICH KING
- MARCELINE IS ACTING STRANGELY- CARRYING OUT A STRANGE PLOT
- F/J FIND OUT THAT SHE'S BEING CONTROLLED BY LICH KING AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNDEAD.

- FINN & JAKE STUMBLE UPON THE DOMAIN of THE LICH KING (OR)
- MARCELINE LEADS F/J INTO TROUBLE. F/J HAVE TO GET

ALLIES-- POTENTIALLY
- FRIENDLY SKELETON
- GOBLIN TRAITOR
- WRAITH
- MARCELINE

- WEIGHT of LICH KING'S MENACE SHOULD BE CLEAR.
- TURNS JAKE INTO A ZOMBIE?
- TAKES CONTROL of MARCELINE.
- —TURNS MARCELINE AGAINST FINN AND JAKE

ZOMBIE WELL

THE INVERTED TOWER

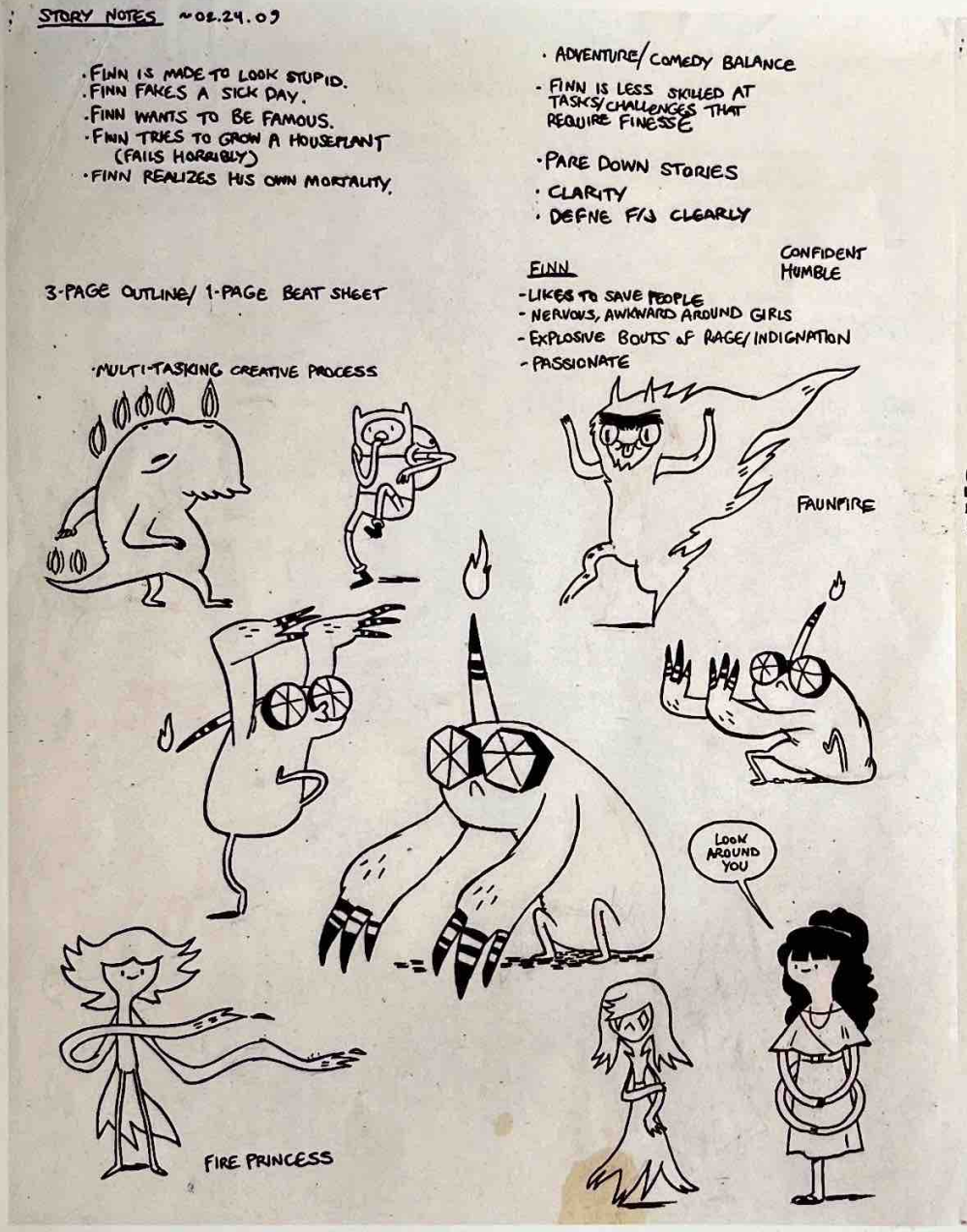
WISHING WELL

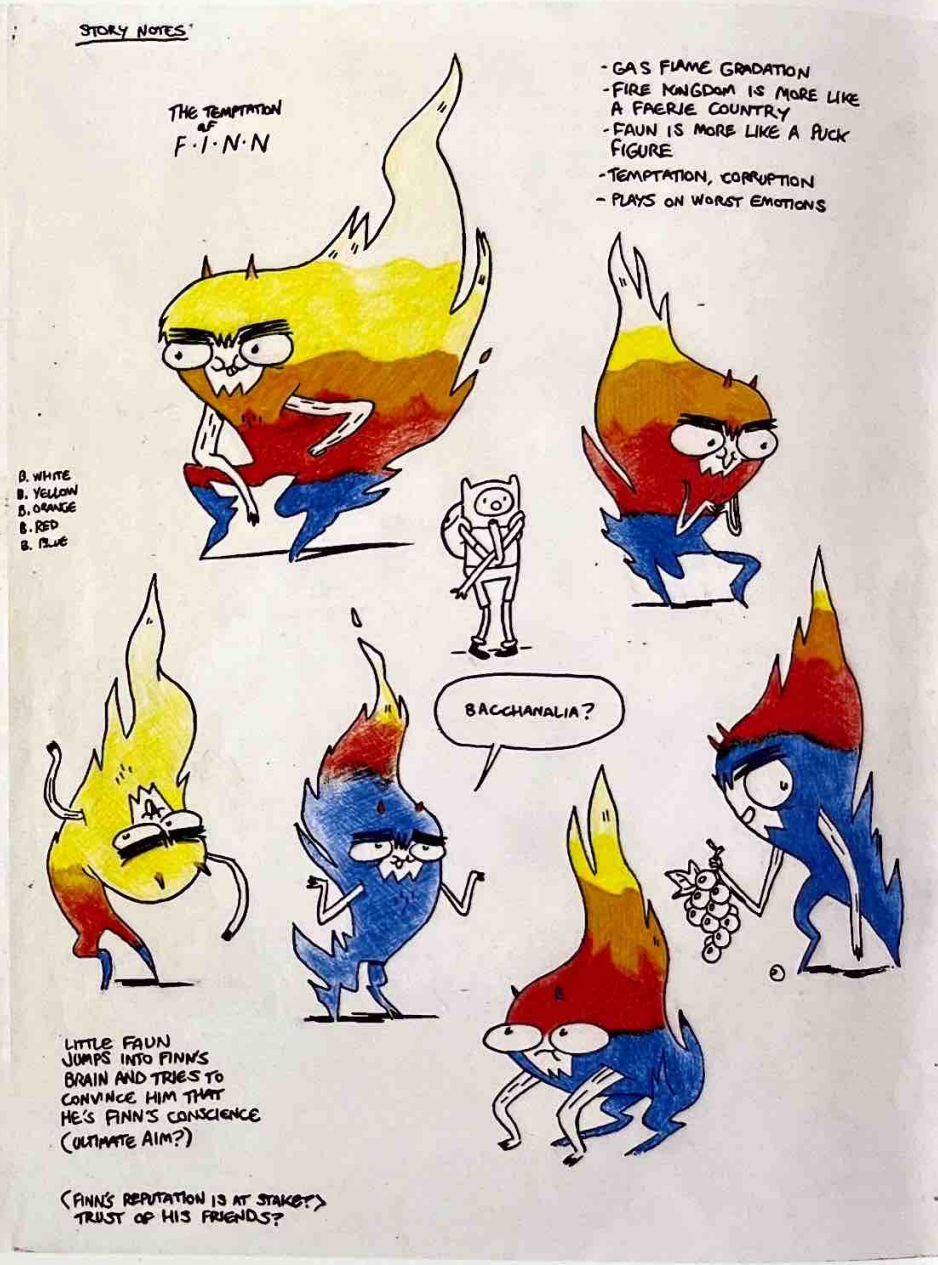
SECRET PASSAGE

- CONFINE THE ACTION TO THIS AREA?

- MARCELINE ENDS UP WITH GRUDGING RESPECT FOR FINN.

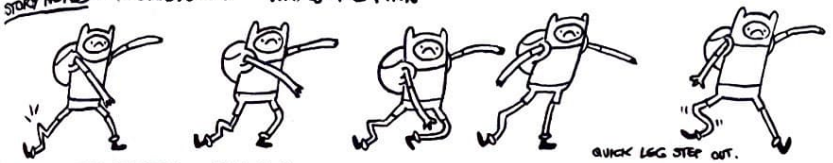
STORY NOTES





This spread: Early story notes from Adam Muto, including a drawing of a proto–Flame Princess and an exploration of how to break Finn's leg in an episode (ultimately it was a freak deer who did it).

STORY NOTES ~ .03.03.2009 'WAY of THE FINN'



QUICK LEG STEP OUT.

-BROKEN LEG SPRINGS AFTER ON EACH LIMP
-TRAMPING THROUGH BRAMBLES, GETS SCRATCHED UP.

-FERRYMASTER HAS HIS ARM CHOPPED OFF? DISMEMBERMENT TOO MUDDIED?

-ALL of THE VIOLENCE COULD BE CONFINED TO FINN'S LEG. COULD GET SCRATCHED & BROKEN

-INVENT NON-IMITABLE LEG MALADY? ANKLE SPRAIN LEG TWISTER. TINY TORNADO?



ANKLE TWISTER!

KRK

WALLMASTER



FERRYMASTER



-FINN IS PINNED DOWN UNDER TREE
-MUSHROOM PEOPLE EMERGE/ RESCUE FINN
-TOSS HIM INTO A GORGE (HOW DOES FINN KNOW WHICH?)



FERRY MONSTER



STORY NOTES ~ 03.13.2009 FINN THE PACIFIST

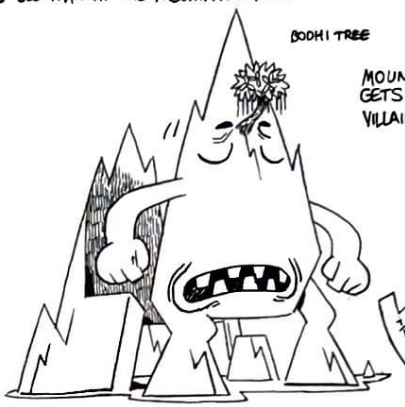
HAPPYMAKERS
MAKEHAPPERS

- SOLUTIONS TO HOW TO RESOLVE POINT (14)
- SHIFT IN FINN'S PERSPECTIVE.
- REVEAL of OLD-MAN-IN-THE-MOUNTAIN'S AIM.

BODHI TREE

MOUNTAIN MAN GETS ANGRY/ VILLAINOUS?

-THE STONE RECLINER





-VIKINGS BECOME A BUNCH of AWFUL LINE DANCERS
-DISTURBS THE MOUNTAIN MAN EVEN MORE DRASTICALLY.





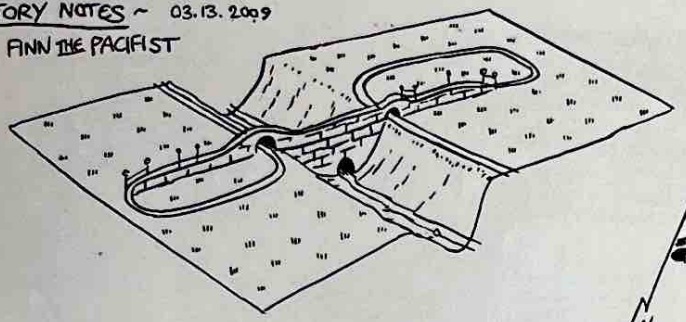
- FINN PROVOKES ROCK CREATURE INTO AN ACT OF VIOLENCE. HE'S A DANG HYPOCRITE.
- FINN SINGS A SONG THAT GETS THE VIKINGS DANCING
- FINN HELPS THE ROCK KING DEFEAT ONE of HIS BULLIES.
- CRYING/ AVALANCHES EVENTUALLY CRUSH ALL of THE WARRING VIKINGS



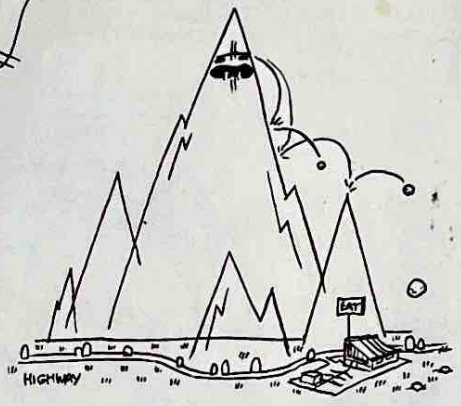
STORY NOTES

STORY NOTES ~ 03.13.2009

FINN THE PACIFIST



- START WITH FINN DISAPPROVING OF THE ROCK GUY'S TEARS.
- PERSONALITY OF ROCK GUY SHOULD NOT BE ANNOYINGLY ONE-NOTE.
- RETURN TO ROCK MAN AFTER EACH ATTEMPT TO PRACTICE HIS PHILOSOPHY.
- FUN TIMES CREATE VIOLENT IMPRESSION ON ROCK GUY.
- IF NON-VIOLENT IDEA COMES FROM WITHIN FINN.



--END CONFRONTATION WITH THE ROCK GUY.

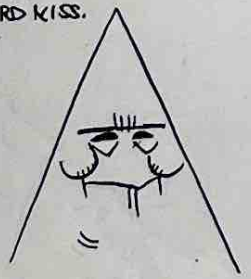
- DESPITE FAILING HE DOES NOT TO BE CORRECTED.
- VIOLENTLY NON-VIOLENT
- START WITH ACTION SCENE
- ANGRILY BEING NON-VIOLENT AS EVER.
- AN ACTUAL PROBLEM SHERIFF IN TIME.
- YELLING THREAT of VIOLENCE.
- EPIPHANY DURING THE 3RD ACT EVERY EPISODE
- FINN GOING NUTS
- AWKWARD KISS.

--VIOLENCE PARTY

--GOAT VIKINGS



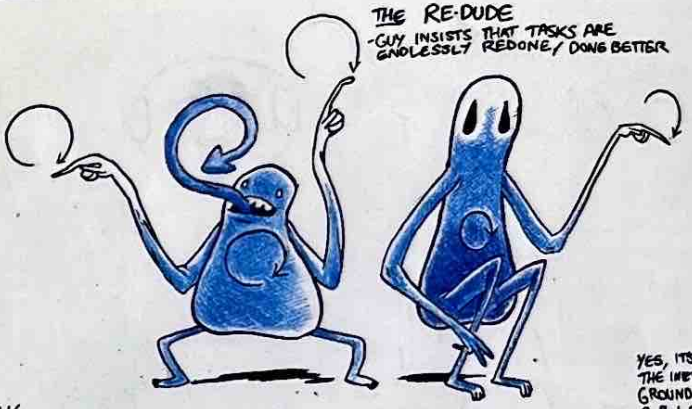
WEREWOLVES VS KNIGHTS



STORY NOTES 3-26-2009

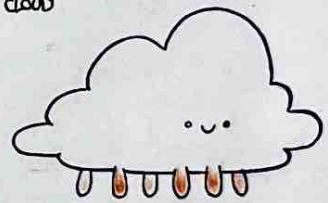
THE RE-DUDE

-GUY INSISTS THAT TASKS ARE ENDLESSLY REDONE/DONE BETTER

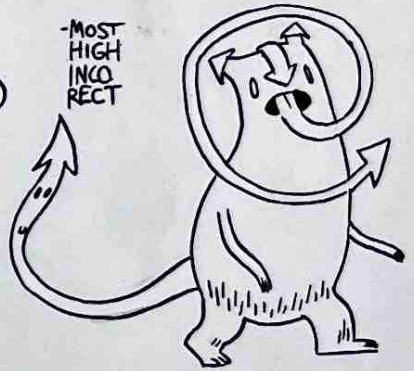


YES, ITS TRUE. THE INEVITABLE GROUNDHOG DAY EPISODE.

MILK CLOUD



-MOST HIGH INCORRECT



This page and opposite left: More early story notes from Adam Muto, including ideas that would develop into the episode "Memories of Boom Boom Mountain."

Below: The top left membrane creature drawing is by Pen, the other two are by Adam Muto.

STORY NOTES ~ 07.10.2009

BOXCARS

- PARE DOWN TO IMAGE OF THE TRAIN.
- POSSIBLE REASONS TO HOP ABOARD:
  - WANT TO SEE WHAT'S ON TRAIN
  - LOSES BALL IN NEIGHBOR'S ~~YARD~~ YARD/TRAIN
  - LOSES JAKE TO THE PASSING BOXCAR

- PEOPLE (DECIDELY NOT HOBOES) HAVE ALL ENDED UP ON THE TRAIN CHASING AFTER FRISBEES GETTING SNATCHED FROM MID-AIR.

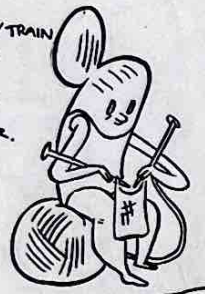


- TRAIN COULD SWALLOW PEOPLE. DOORS LOCK SHUT ONCE THEY'RE ABOARD.

- FINN COULD PANIC FIRST. SMASH THROUGH WINDOWS, PULL BRAKE, THE OLD PEOPLE WOULD TRY TO STOP THEM. OR THE CONDUCTOR WANTS TO BE FOUND

- WHAT WOULD FINN/JAKE WANT ONCE THEY GOT ABOARD.

YARNBALL TAILS





- JAKE LANDS ABOARD THE MYSTERY TRAIN. WHILE FINN IS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO BOARD, JAKE (O/S) BECOMES CARRIED AWAY WITH BEING A HOBO/ A DOOMED PASSENGER ON THE FLYING DUTCHMAN EXPRESS

OR

- FINN STRUGGLES ABOARD THE TRAIN AND FINDS THAT JAKE HAS BECOME THEIR DE FACTO LEADER (JAKE GOES NATIVE EASILY)
- FINN HAS TO GET JAKE TO REMEMBER WHO HE IS.
- TOO 'HEART of DARKNESS?' TRAIN MAKES YOU FORGETFUL?
  - REPLACE ALPHA MARVIN WITH JAKE. THE OTHER PASSENGERS HAVE CONVINCED JAKE THAT HE'S JUST LIKE THEM.
  -

- FINN USES THE BALL TO REMIND JAKE WHO HE IS.

- AREA AROUND TRAINTRACKS COULD BE A FORBIDDEN ZONE

- THE TRAINMEN FIND OUT THAT FINN IS TRYING TO GET JAKE AWAY FROM THEM. ~~THE PASSENGERS~~ THE PASSENGERS TURN ON FINN. THEY'D RATHER THROW JAKE TO HIS DEATH THAN LOSE HIM.

- CLIMACTIC ESCAPE

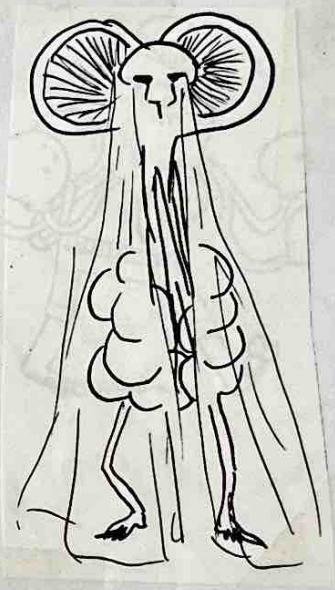
- RETIREMENT TRAIN KID IN THE RETIREMENT HOME.



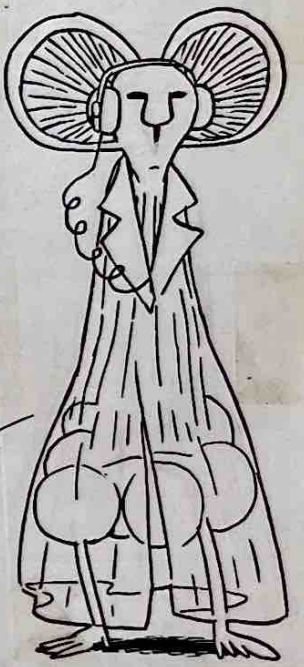
"I ~~YOU~~ LOST MY TICKET"
"YOU LOST ~~MY~~ YOUR TICKET"

STORY NOTES ~ 12.17.09

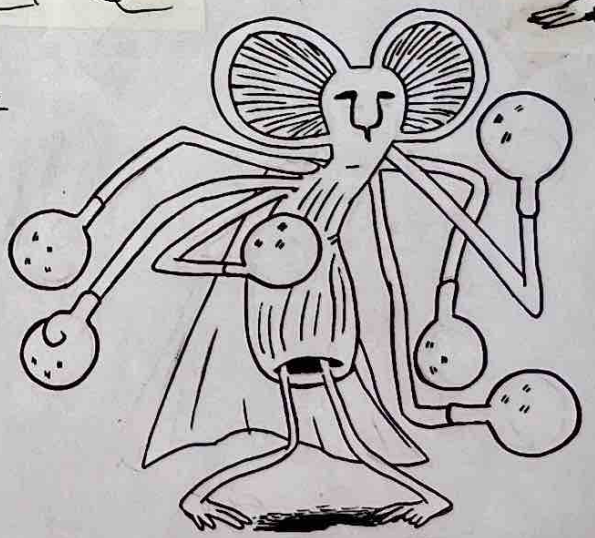
JAKESUIT



TRANSLUCENT TRENCH

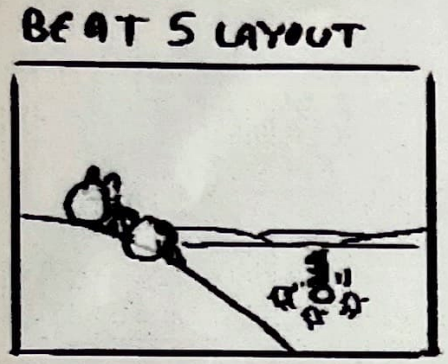


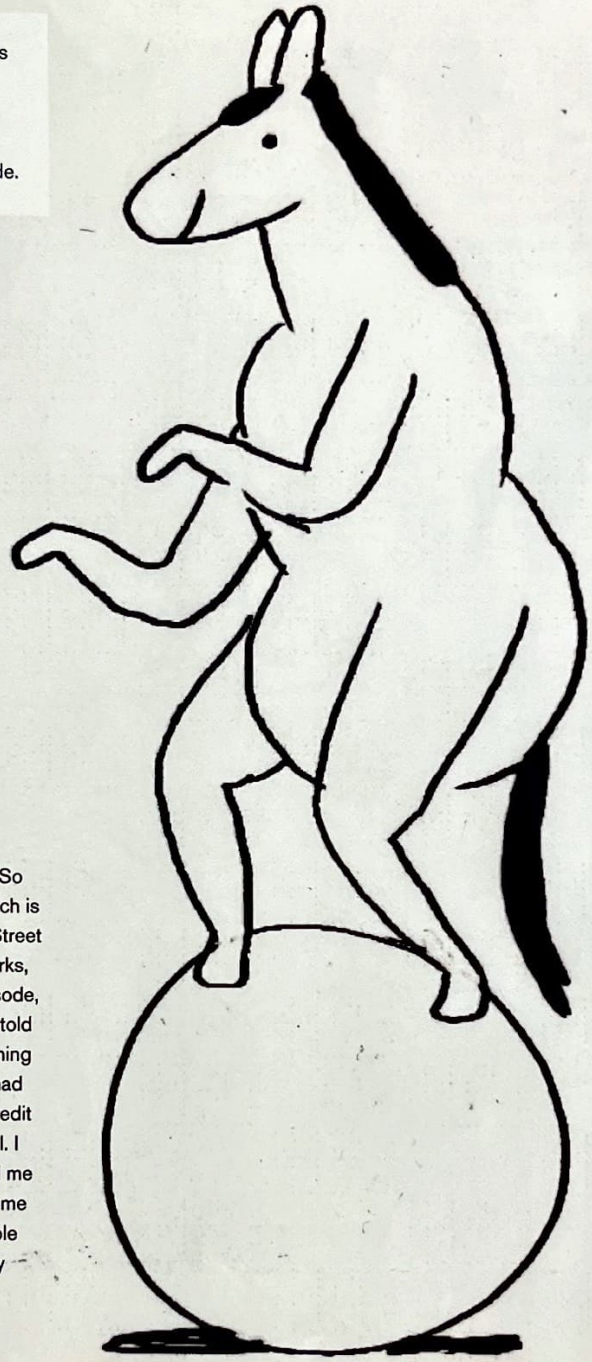
ALT
- MEMBRILLO
- JIMMY SPORE



"JAMES BAXTER THE HORSE"

In the episode "James Baxter the Horse," James Baxter is a horse that rolls around on his ball, making people happy. James Baxter also is an experienced feature film animator who lent his name, voice, and animation skills to this episode.





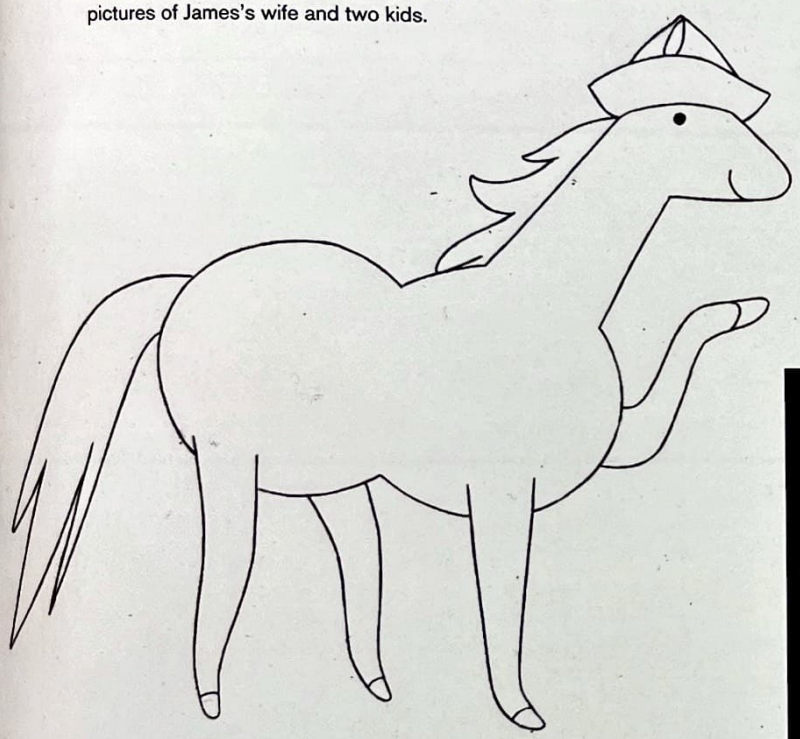


James Baxter, animator and voice of James Baxter the Horse, on the episode's origins: So Pen and I had lunch at Jimmy's Super Lunch, which is a tiny hamburger stand on the corner of Flower Street and Sonora, just down the street from DreamWorks, and he told me about this idea he had for an episode, and wanted to see if I would be interested. I had told him a few months earlier that, if he ever had anything that he needed on the show, to give me a call. I had already helped out Alex Hirsch on the opening credit sequence for *Gravity Falls*, which went really well. I said, "Of course I'm interested!" and then he told me what the episode was about and that he wanted me to be a horse who just goes around making people happy. I laughed and said, "That's great, I'm really flattered." When I finally saw the animatic for the episode, it really bowled me over. I'm a fan of the show and when I heard Jake say, "James Baxter's so good, man! He always knows just what to say to cheer a guy up," I couldn't believe it. It's just about the most flattering thing that anyone has ever done for me. It was fun to animate, too. I asked Pen about the style, and he said it needed to look like it fit into *Adventure Time*'s world, but it would be cool if the animation looked just a little slicker. Like I said, I was a fan of the show—I just thought it was so uninhibited. It is one of the few shows my family watch all together. One year our Christmas card was a drawing that I'd done of me and my family as *Adventure Time* characters. I sent one to Pen, so I imagine he knew how popular the show is in our house.

On some of the specifics of how the production of the animation for "James Baxter the Horse" fit in with the wider episode, animated in South Korea: It was a little out of the ordinary, I guess. The overseas studio creates the final layouts, so when I animated the horse I was just guessing where he was going to be based on the animatic. I animated most of it in the center of the paper so it would be easier to reposition the animation at the compositing stage after all the other characters were done. I did all the rough animation at home, and my wife, Kendra, did all the clean-up drawings. They did the ink and paint in Korea. If you look at the title card for that episode, it shows James Baxter the Horse at an animation desk. So that's exactly what my desk and lamp at home look like, and if you look closely you can see little pictures of James's wife and two kids.

On reaction to the episode from family and friends: My kids loved it. After it aired, I got calls from friends asking me if I knew that there was this TV show with my name on it, and I've been asked to sign a couple of beach balls.

On how he knew Pen, and their history together: I knew Pen through some mutual friends from CalArts. I usually do a guest lecture or two there most years, and I've gotten to know some of the students over the years. One of the things I do for the students is an animation demo where they give me an assignment, then I sit down and animate it in front of them, which I do while talking through the process. Pen told me that when I did it for his year, one guy shouted out, "Do a horse balancing on a beach ball!" trying to get me to do something really tricky. I remember this vaguely, and that I chose to do something a little simpler as a demo, but Pen remembers thinking "I really want to see that," and here we are.



Opposite: James Baxter character concept drawings by Pen.

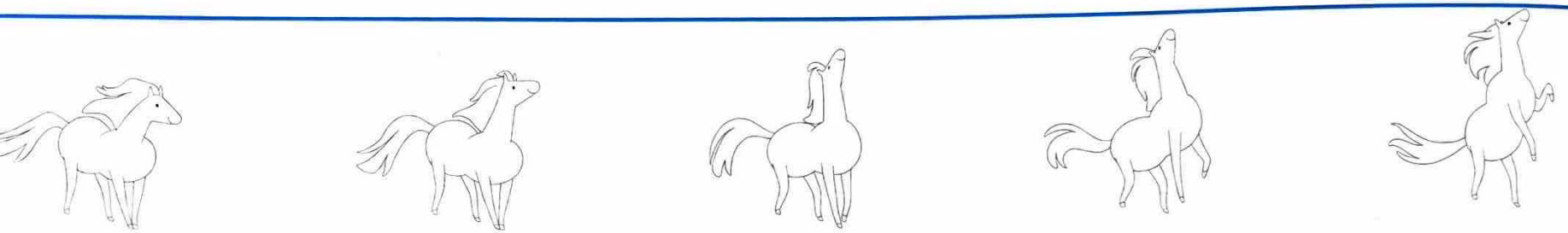
Left: Animation drawing of James Baxter the Horse from the episode "James Baxter the Horse" by James Baxter (the man).

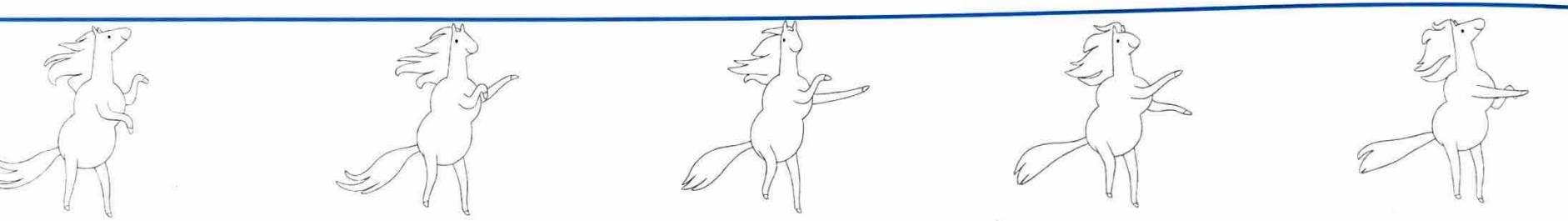
Below: Opening title card art for the episode, including representations of James's family and home animation desk. Designed by James Baxter.

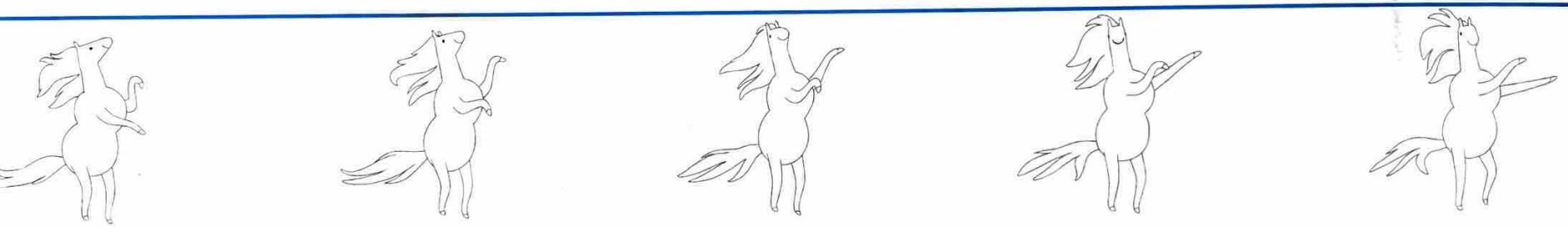


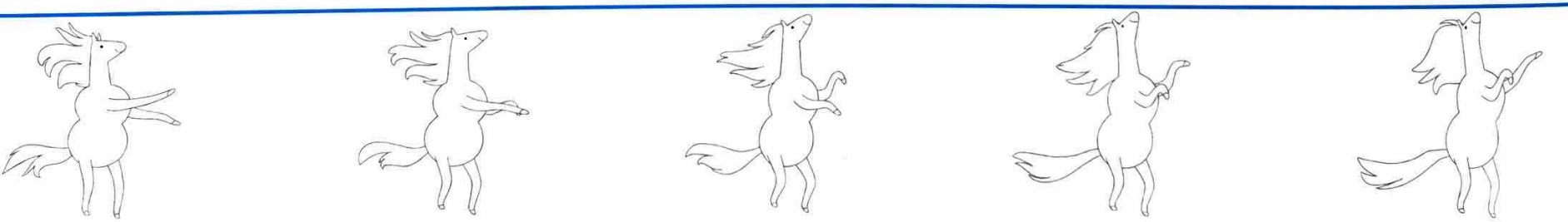
JAMES BAXTER ANIMATION











This spread: James Baxter has worked as an animator on feature films at Walt Disney Animation Studios, DreamWorks Animation, and at his own independent James Baxter Animation. While the character design of James Baxter the Horse fit seamlessly into the *Adventure Time* world, the horse animation by James Baxter had distinctly feature film–level qualities of movement in contrast with the rest of the characters–which was partly the point, of course.







This spread:
Inventive scenes from "James Baxter the Horse." This episode's backgrounds were designed by Santino Lascano and Derek Hunter; painted by Martin Ansolabehere, Sandra Calleros, and Ron Russell; and color styled by Catherine E. Simmonds.















Art director Nick Jennings on the "James Baxter the Horse" backgrounds:

Somvilay Xayaphone did a lot of the storyboard for this episode. It was great. Very wild and creative. From an art direction perspective it offered a lot of chances for fun design and color. When it came to color styling the inside of the sound tree that Finn and Jake go to, we tried to make the whole thing feel like a '70s disco. Sort of psychedelic band posters from the Fillmore. Lots of really hot colors, darkish, and moody. Also an episode like this, where you're going from room to room, you need to try and establish some way of remembering which room you've been in and which rooms you haven't. I tend to like to stylize each room with a thematic color. So in this episode you'll notice that each room is primarily one color–green, red, purple, etc. That way its more interesting to look at and if we return to the room again later in the show, it is familiar.







"A GLITCH IS A GLITCH"

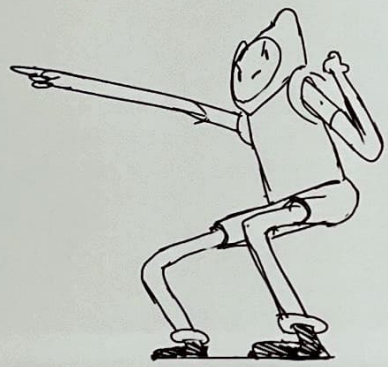
"A Glitch Is a Glitch" is the first *Adventure Time* episode written and directed entirely by an outside filmmaker and his team. Irish director David OReilly worked in-house at Cartoon Network Studios while collaborating with a small crew in Germany to produce this 3-D episode.



















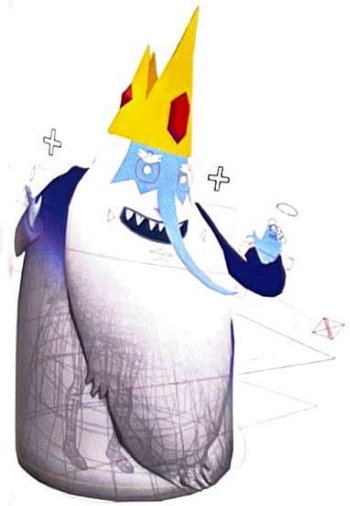




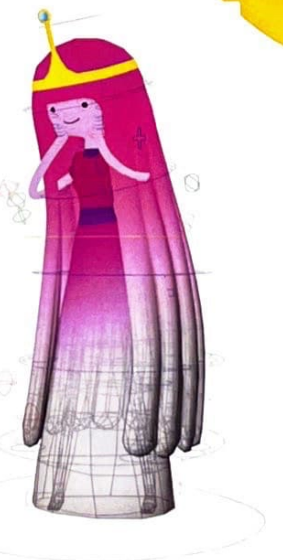
David OReilly, guest writer and director of "A Glitch Is a Glitch," on this episode's origins and initial conceptual discussions with Pen: We considered a lot of different ways of collaborating. One thing I wanted to do was put people directly into this 3-D world without explaining it. The usual approach would be to have something trigger the world to change, but it seemed more interesting to just jump in and never mention the most obvious thing. Glitch [image information degenerated by computer error] has always been part of my work in 3-D—it can be interesting purely from a design perspective, but I was excited to use it as a narrative device for this.

On how the collaboration with the crew and network worked: It started with a couple of meetings with Pen, Pat, and Kent. We were throwing around ideas, and I was figuring out what was allowed on the network and what wasn't. Nothing I had really done up to that point would be considered kid friendly, but I really respect how the show's story artists navigate that territory, so it was a learning process. I then wrote it out as a script and went to a couple of friends for notes. After that I went and boarded it and pitched it to the rest of the crew. I would show Pen progress every now and again to make sure I wasn't stepping too far out of the show's world. There were a number of notes from the network, which was frustrating at times because none of it was really obscene, but Pen and Adam helped a lot in mitigating that.





On how the animation was produced: I worked out of Cartoon Network Studios for the length of the production. I wrote, boarded, and built the sets and characters in 3-D over a period of a few months. Kent helped with the voice record, which was also done in-house. My friends in Germany helped with the animation and worked remotely—we would Skype every other day. Overall, it took about nine months. The crew was quite small; I was directing, editing, rendering, and compositing, and most of the animation was done by four people. [The episode was produced by Jakob Schuh and animated by John Coomey, Robert Lehman, Peter Ruschel, Max Stohr, and Tobias Von Burkersroda at Studio Soi in Berlin.]



On the unusual concept of handing over complete creative control of a TV show episode to a guest director: It's great. I don't think any show in history has done something as creatively bold. Especially at a time when *Adventure Time* is so popular, because the risk is ever greater. I'm aware that my episode is either loved or hated. I've had the most extreme responses on both ends, and it's a testament to how brave Pen is in not trying to please everyone at once.



A GLITCH IS A GLITCH

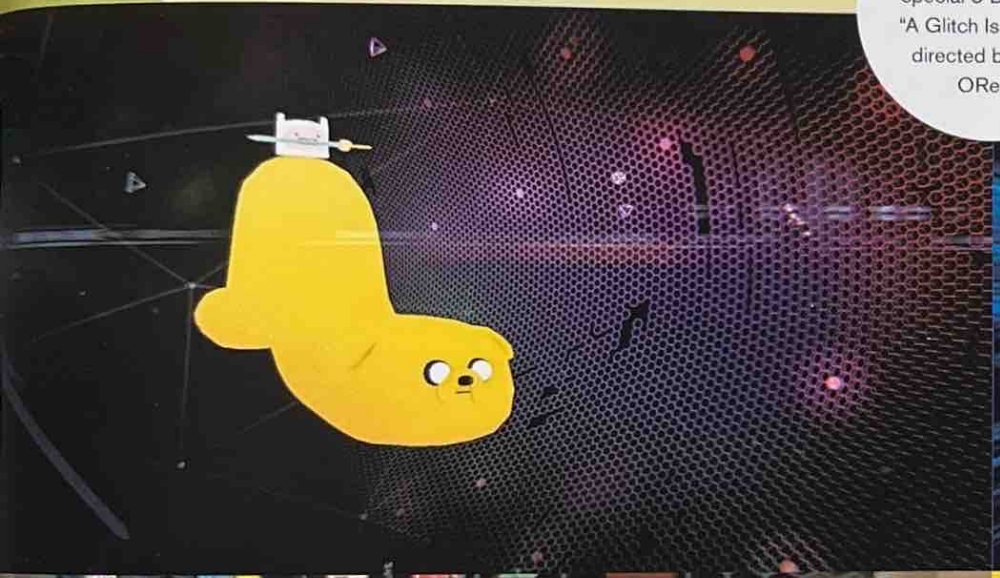








This spread: Scenes from the special 3-D episode "A Glitch Is a Glitch," directed by David OReilly.

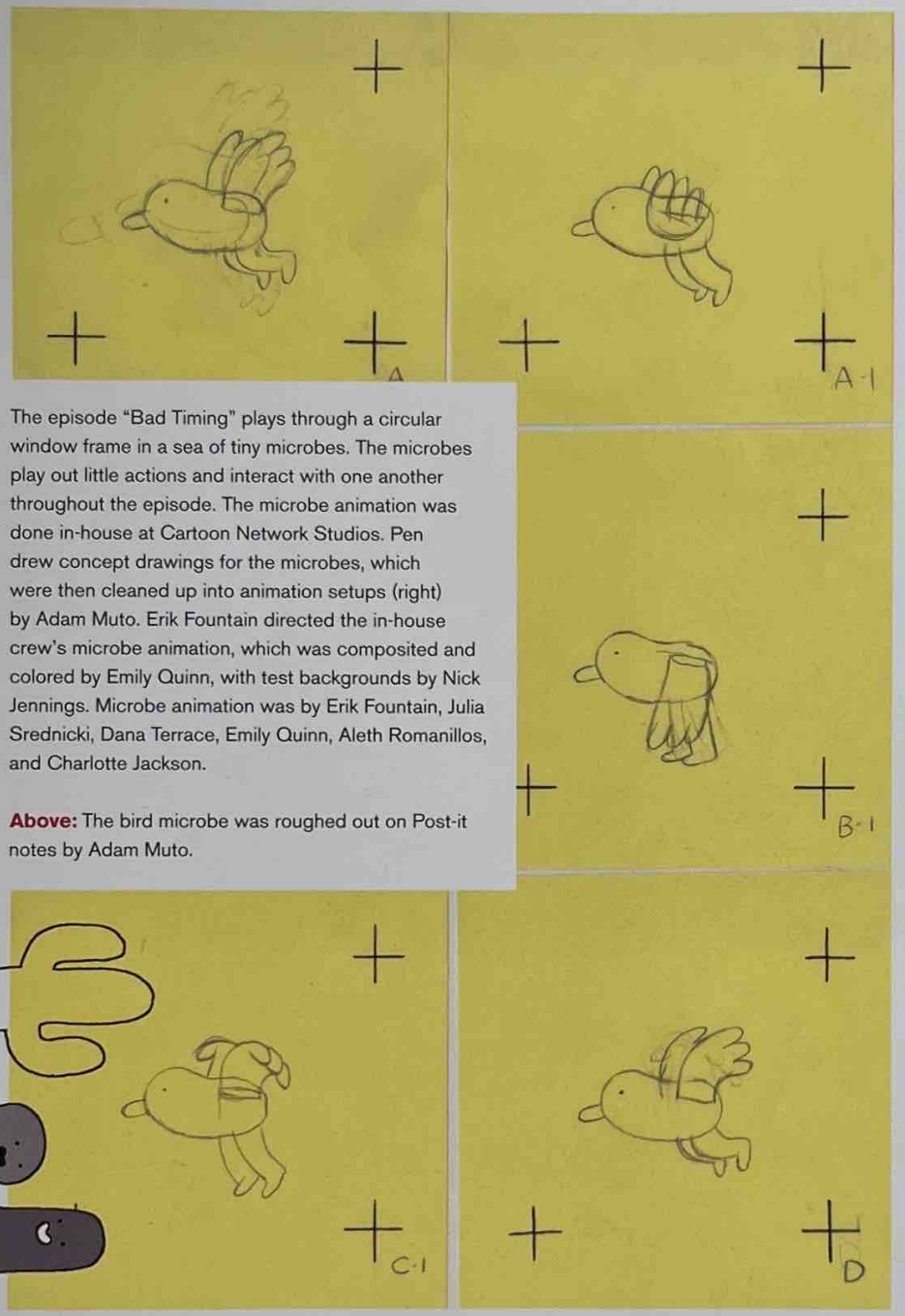






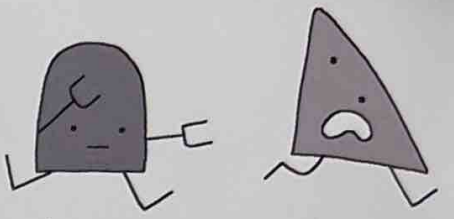


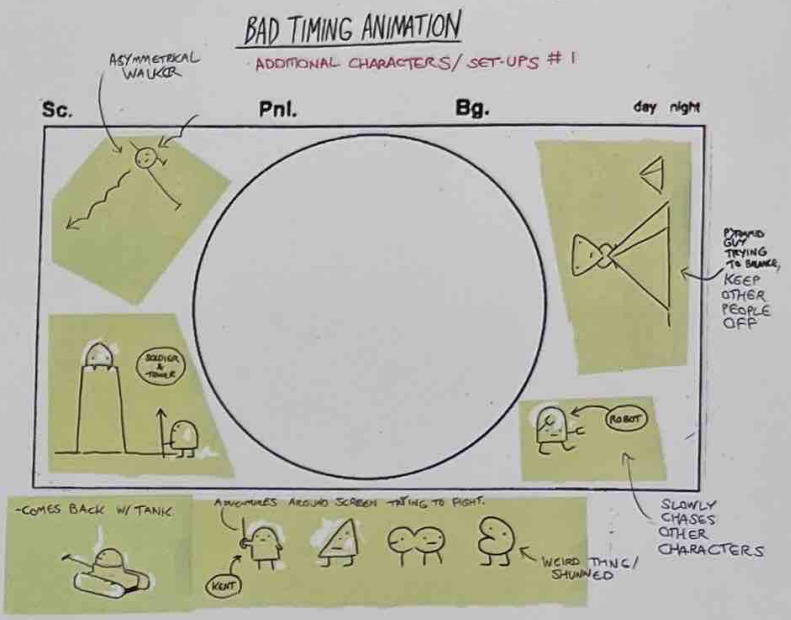
"BAD TIMING"

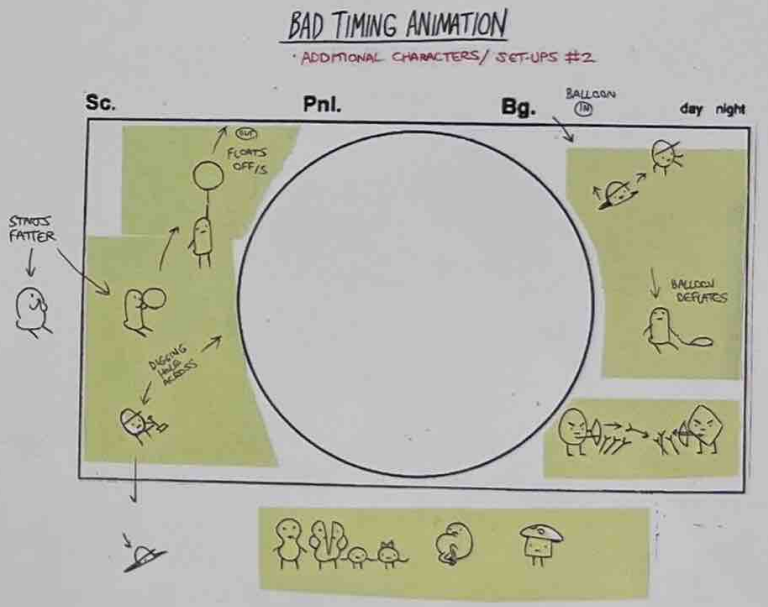


The episode "Bad Timing" plays through a circular window frame in a sea of tiny microbes. The microbes play out little actions and interact with one another throughout the episode. The microbe animation was done in-house at Cartoon Network Studios. Pen drew concept drawings for the microbes, which were then cleaned up into animation setups (right) by Adam Muto. Erik Fountain directed the in-house crew's microbe animation, which was composited and colored by Emily Quinn, with test backgrounds by Nick Jennings. Microbe animation was by Erik Fountain, Julia Srednicki, Dana Terrace, Emily Quinn, Aleth Romanillos, and Charlotte Jackson.

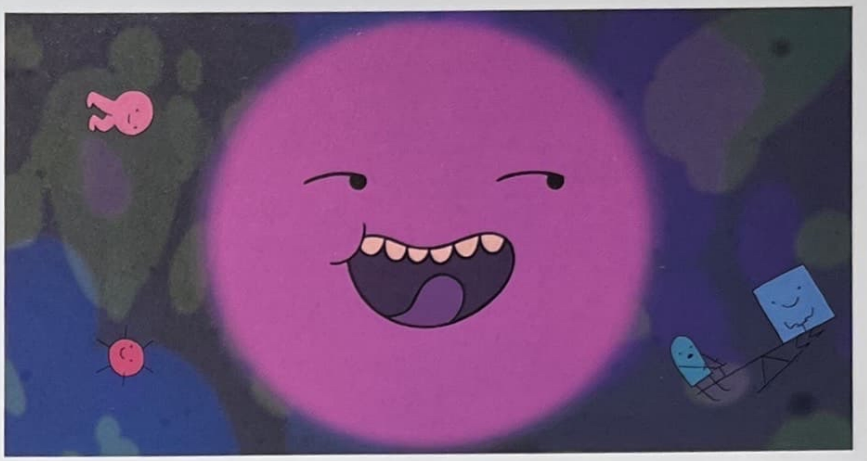
Above: The bird microbe was roughed out on Post-it notes by Adam Muto.















This page:
After witnessing Princess Bubblegum's demonstration of her time-travel device, Lumpy Space Princess meets an old classmate Johnny, now a businessman. After hitting it off with Johnny, she becomes jealous of his business dinner with the princess, firebombs the castle, and unintentionally transports Johnny's head and body (separately) to the tiny microbe world that frames the entire episode.





"FOOD CHAIN"

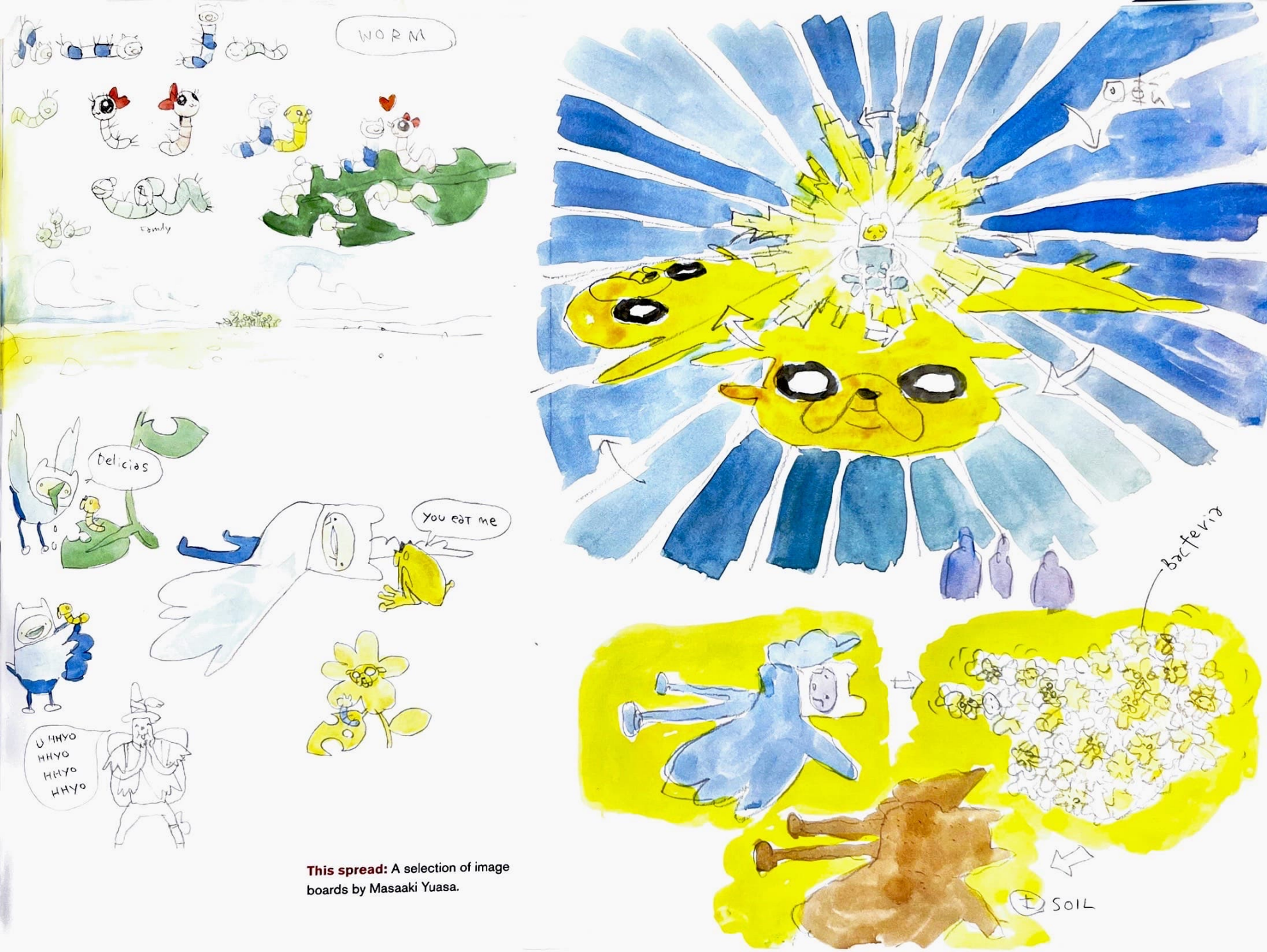
The season six episode "Food Chain" is written and directed by by Masaaki Yuasa (known as the director of the 2004 film *Mind Game*, among other work), who, after David OReilly, is the second guest director to write and produce an entire episode with his own team of artists.









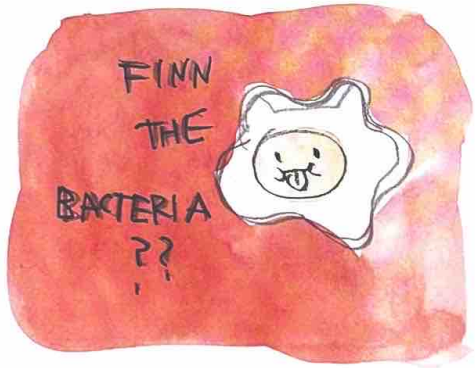


This spread: A selection of image boards by Masaaki Yuasa.

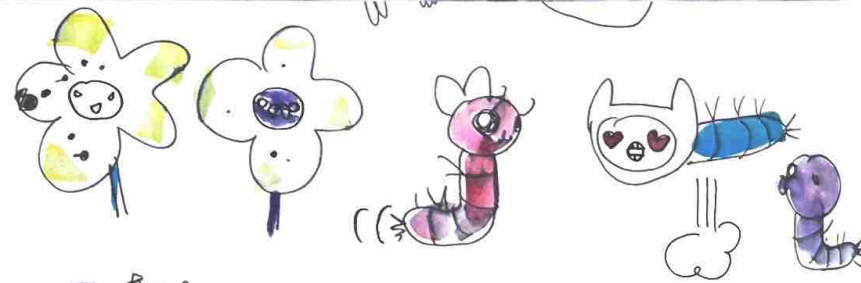
"FOOD CHAIN"













This spread: A selection of image boards by guest director Masaaki Yuasa from the episode "Food Chain."


Entrance
Exit
you guys are food
Let's try to be eatem!!

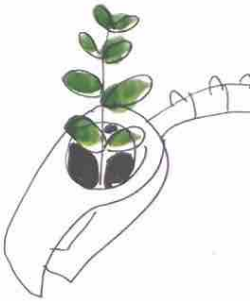

Entrance
Exit
xou guys are food
Let's try to be eatem!!


Let's try to eat !!
It is made of candy
sweet
crisp
crisp
crunch


EXHIBITION
Don't eat
licking okay
ONLY licking
licking ONLY

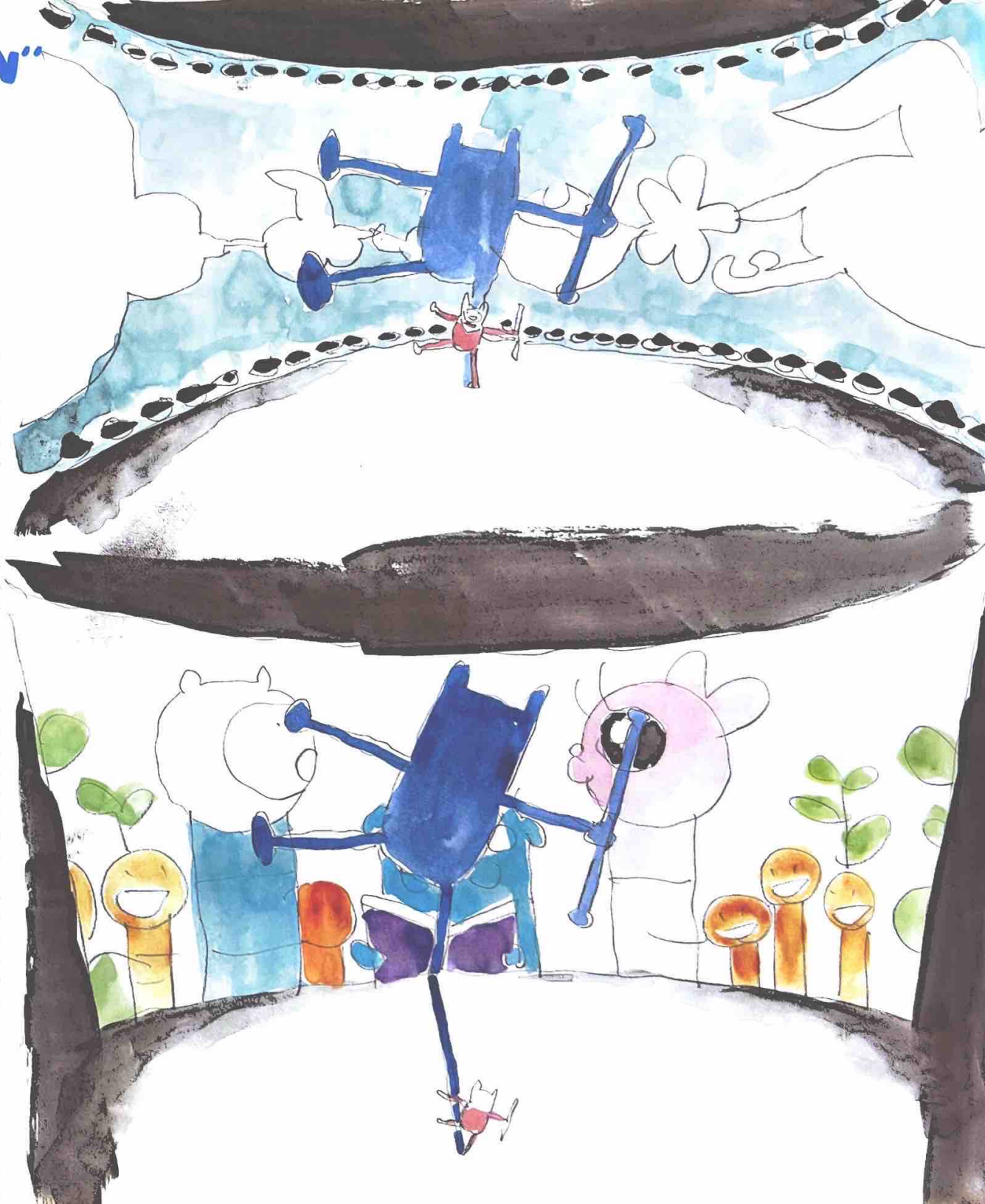

こんな気持ちだっけ？
気が遠くなるけど
ずいぶんと遠かったような


MARRY ME

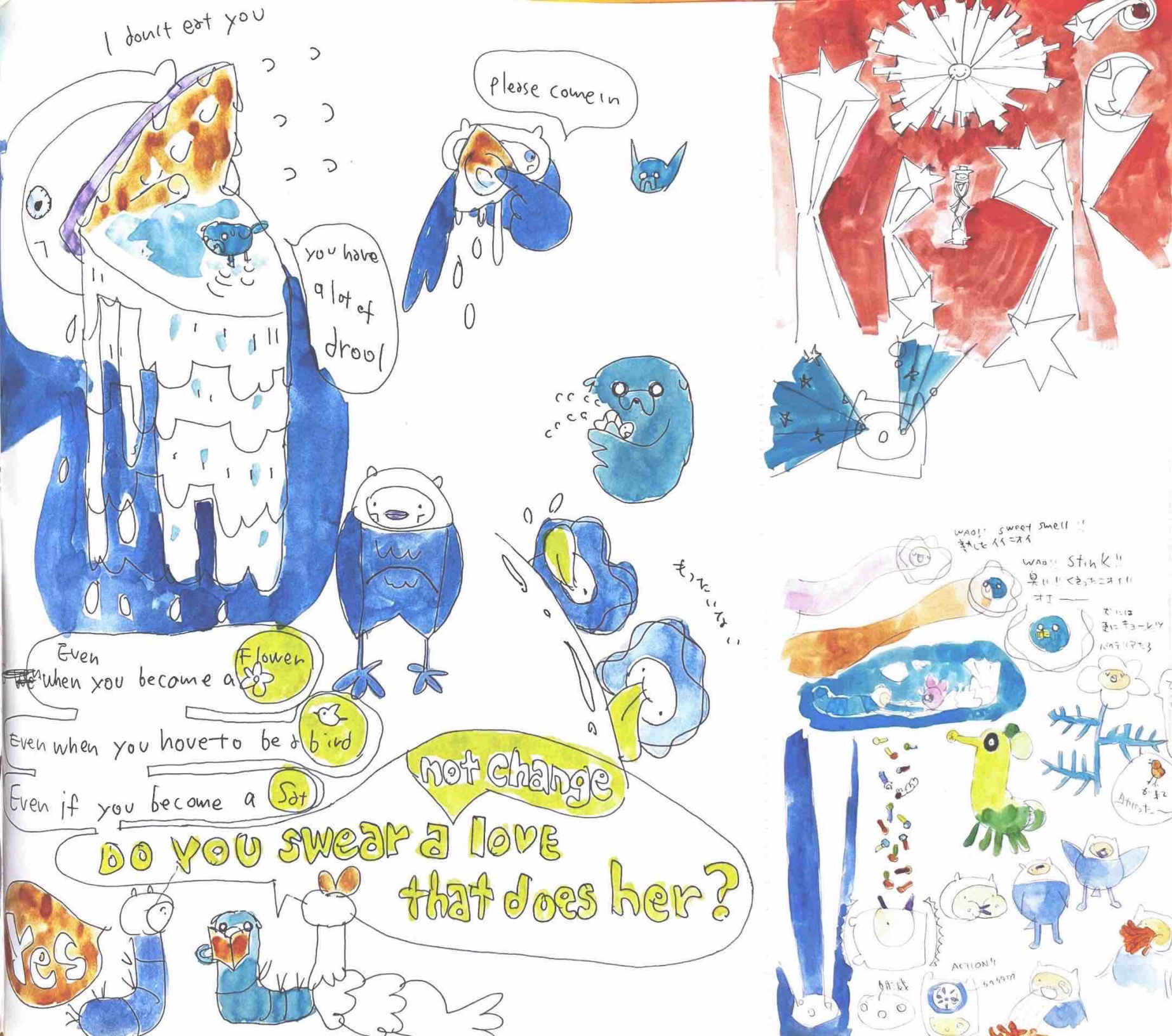


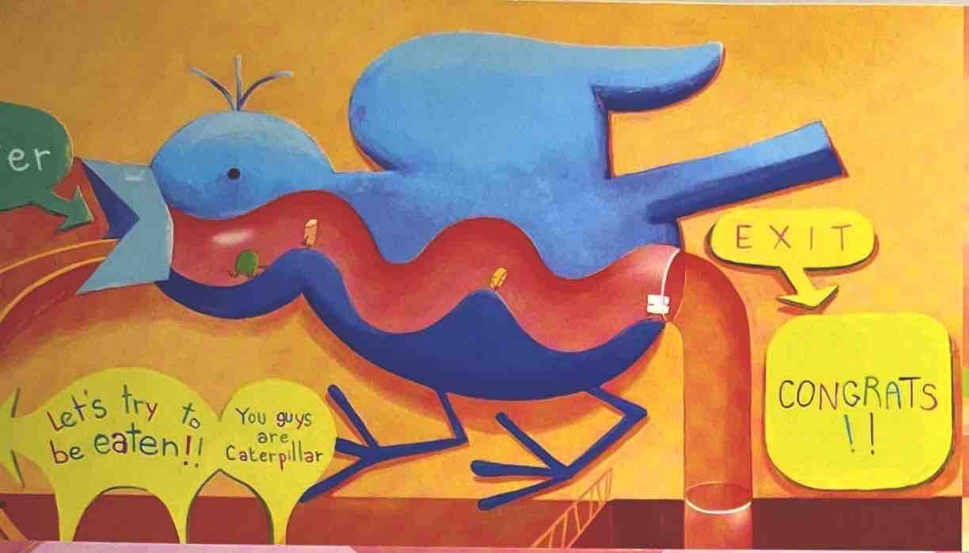
"FOOD CHAIN"

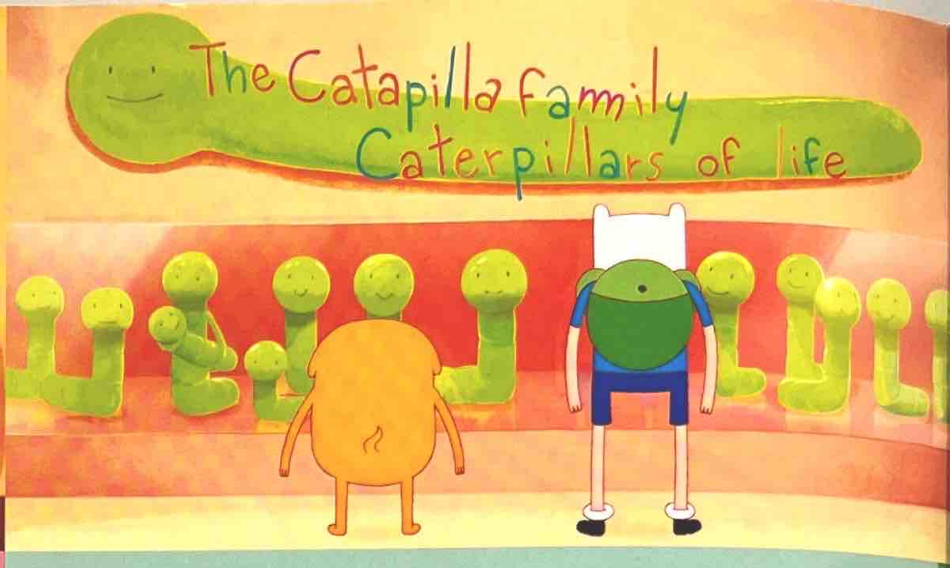




This spread: A selection of image boards by guest director Masaaki Yuasa from the episode "Food Chain." "Some of these I remember from Yuasa-san's stay at the studio toward the beginning of the project when he and Eunyoung Choi had an office at the studio for a few weeks. Images were pinned up in the conference room and used for a rough pitch (with Eunyoung translating) to the crew. A lot of them seem like they were carried through to the final result pretty faithfully." –Adam Muto


I don't eat you
Please come in
you have a lot of drool
もったいない
Even when you become a Flower
Even when you have to be a bird
Even if you become a Cat
not change
do you swear a love that does her?
Yes
WAO! sweet smell !!
WAO!! stink!!
ACTION!!


er
EXIT
CONGRATS !!
Let's try to be eaten!!
You guys are Caterpillar


The Catapilla family
Caterpillars of life


You guys are Little Birds
Let's Try !!







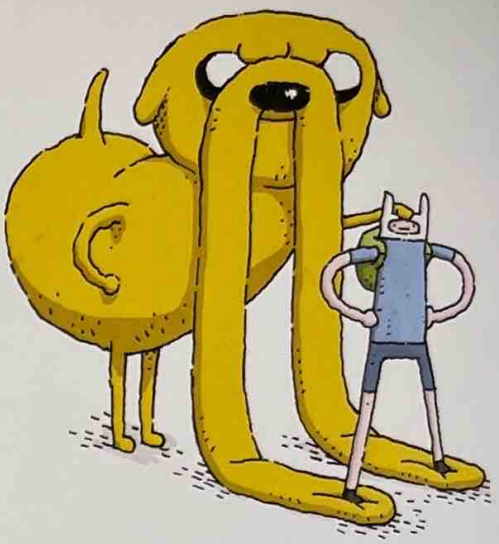


This spread:
Scenes from Masaaki Yuasa's "Food Chain" episode illustrating how closely the image boards on previous spreads are translated into final animation.




5
BEYOND
OOO









Above: Fan art by Matt Houston.

Opposite left: A drawing of Pen by Kent Osborne.

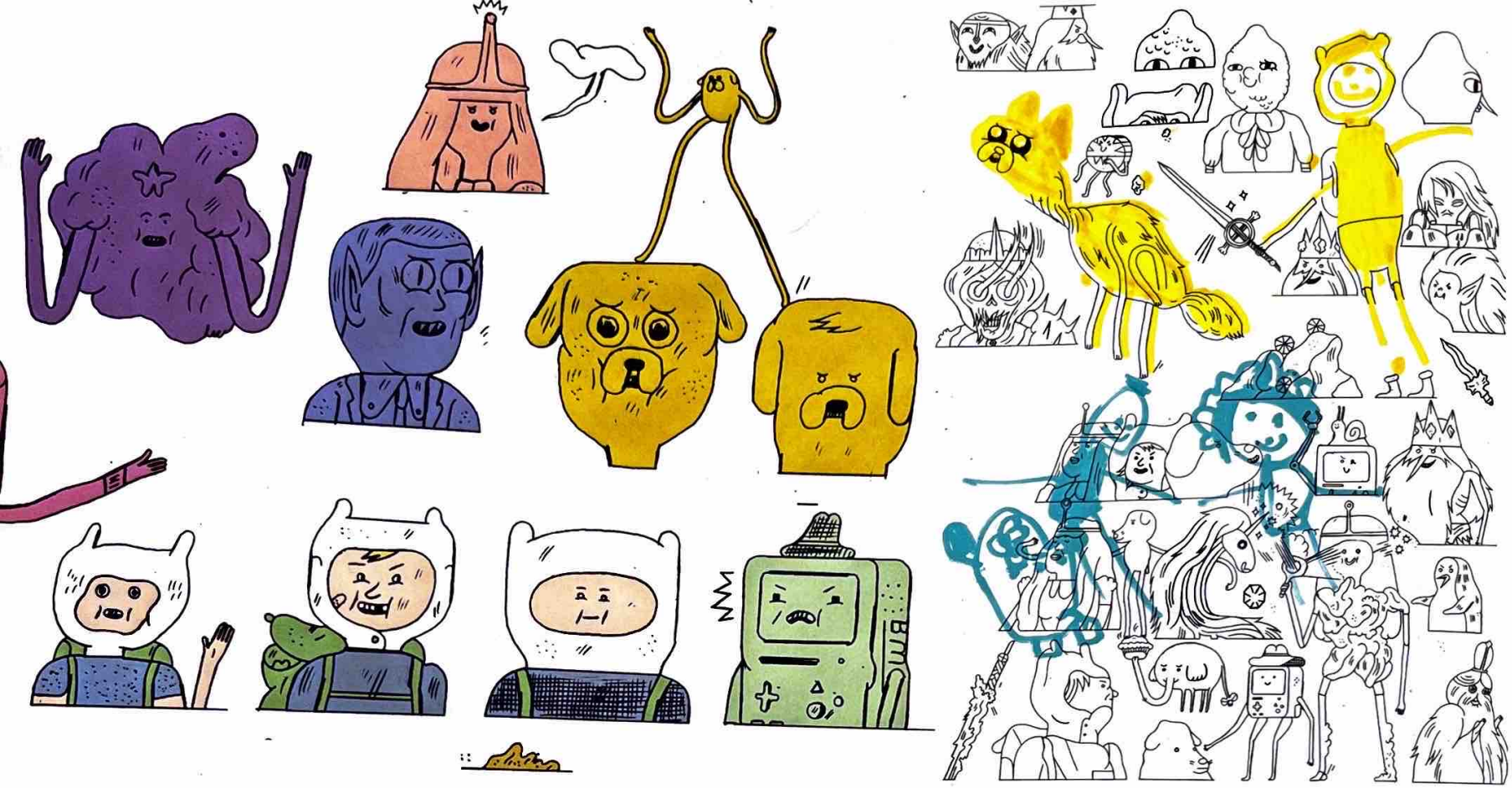
Opposite right: Fionna and Cake artwork by Caio Yo, printed by Mighty Fine on a T-shirt.



The story and success of *Adventure Time* has been intertwined with its fans since the beginning. In a practical sense, it is the fans who have been tuning in to watch the show in large numbers, making it a commercial success. The fans have not been content just to watch *Adventure Time* passively, however. Crowds that show up at conventions and panels to hear the production crew speak have been massive, enthusiastic, and often costumed. *Adventure Time* themes have been tattooed into flesh, spray-painted onto walls, and written into expansive fan fiction. In most online art communities there are stashes of fan art created by amateur and professional artists of all sorts. The enthusiasm of the fans had initially helped to prove the show's potential when it was being pitched, and it has only grown larger since.

It is because of the richly developed world of *Adventure Time* and all its narrative possibilities that the fans want more. In fact, they want to experience more adventures in Ooo faster than the television crew can possibly produce them. To satisfy this demand, partially, Boom! Studios publishes multiple spin-off comic-book titles set in Ooo with stories centering around different characters from the show. These comics build on the concepts created in the show and exist as their own version of the Ooo universe while the show itself remains cloistered as the official canon source of *Adventure Time* stories. Fittingly, many artists from the independent comics and animation scenes have been commissioned to contribute alternate cover art for these titles, just as





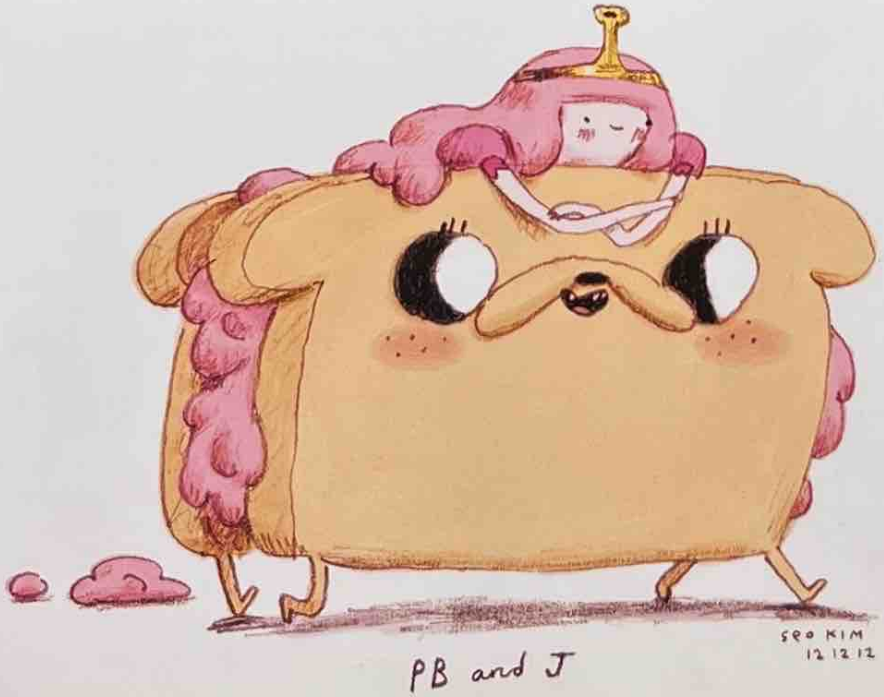
Above: Fan art by Jon Boam (left) and by Jon and his daughter Edith Boam (right).

many of the show's artists themselves were first discovered by Pen and crew because of their indie comics activities. Some of the show's crew work on the comics as well: Storyboard revisionist Natasha Allegri wrote and drew the complete miniseries of the *Fionna and Cake* comics herself.

As would be expected for any popular cartoon show, there has also been various merchandise produced and decorated with *Adventure Time* designs: clothing, accessories, toys, and games. Fans have been eager consumers of these items as well. Notably, items such as the Poketo wallet series are decorated with original designs drawn by crew artists such as Phil Rynda and Andy Ristaino, and some of the many available T-shirt designs are based on sketches and ideas created by the show's crew. The care that has gone into many of these items to retain the artist's unique vision and humor on each product—as opposed to using only bland marketing-approved images—naturally sits well with fans who appreciate these same qualities in the show.

The real strength of the fan-base remains their enthusiasm to participate in the show that they love through active discussion and creation of their own art and stories—not the merch that they collect. This is the fan-base that *Adventure Time* deserves: It is truly a first-wave show of the Internet generation, conceived by artists who have grown up connected, and made possible through the sharing power of the global network. *Adventure Time* the concept has become more than a cartoon: It has become a conduit through which creative people express themselves and a scaffold upon which they build, both in the studio and in the living rooms of fans everywhere.







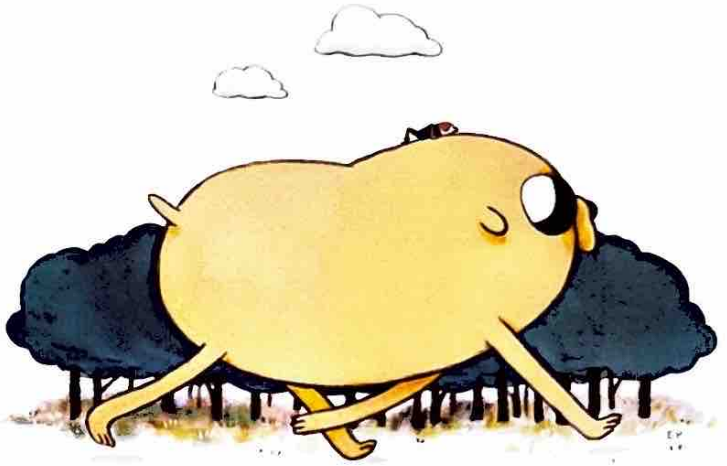
Above: Poketo wallet design collaboration by Pen and Phil Rynda. Final revised artwork by Phil Rynda.

Far left: "PB and J" by Seo Kim, created as fan art before she joined the crew as a storyboard artist.

Near left: Personal artwork by Oliver Akuin.



This page: Personal art by storyboard revisionist Emily Partridge.



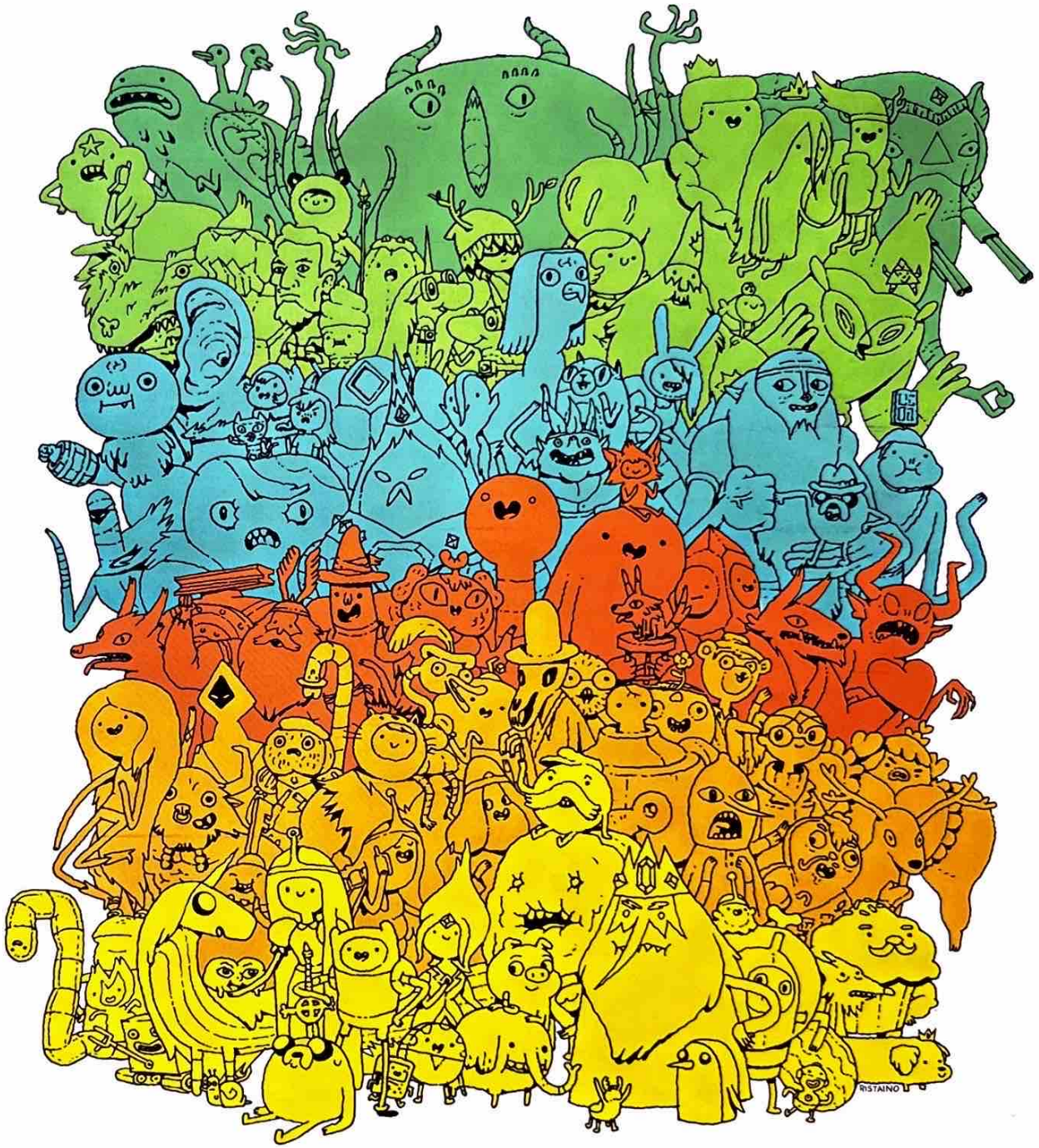
Opposite: Rough and final drawing designed to commemorate one hundred completed eleven-minute episodes by Andy Ristaino. The image contains one hundred characters and was printed on posters and T-shirts.











Thomas Herpich: I think maybe the biggest strength of *Adventure Time*, the number-one secret of its success, is how simple it was when it began. The structure was so flexible that the little seedling *Adventure Time* started out as could grow in any direction, given enough fuel via the tender, loving care of the people working on it. So to me, stepping back to perceive the whole course of the show—I see really clearly a map of our journey as a crew; when we felt silly and excited, the characters were silly and excited; when we were tired, they were tired. And so as we all got more serious the show was able to accommodate that. And I think that's great that whatever's most important to us as writers and artists at the time can be channeled into the show. So that even if our ideas get more serious, for example (not that the show is 100 percent serious now or anything—far from it), they also, hopefully, stay vital and fresh.

Phil Rynda: Hiring this crew to work on a TV show is amazing. I don't know of any other TV show that hires people to be who they are. Funny shows are one thing, where you get people who are funny and you want them to be funny in a certain way. *Adventure Time* hires people who are really interesting artists.

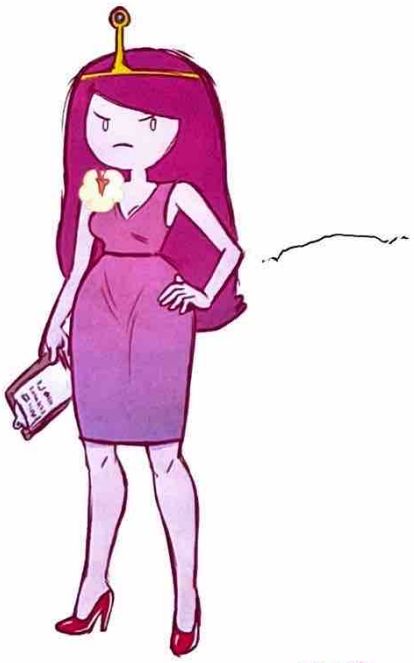
(Continued on page 328)



Opposite: Personal art depicting a massive wizard battle by Thomas Wellmann.

Below: Personal art of Princess Bubblegum by Ian Jones-Quartey.

Right: Personal art of Marceline, Finn, Jake, and Tree Trunks by Charmaine Verhagen.







Left: Fan art of Marceline by Brandon Graham, as published by PictureBox in his personal sketchbook anthology, *Walrus*, in 2013.

Opposite: Fan art depicting elements of the "Guardians of Sunshine" episode by Nick Edwards. Seen here are Hunny Bunny, Jake, Finn throwing the bomba, and Sleepy Sam waiting for his turn to battle in the background.

(Continued from page 325)

Rob Sorcher: *Adventure Time* is the thing I'm the most proud of in my time here. It was a huge risk—a huge risk—for this company to take. And everyone said that we would be wrong. They said it was a weird little show, it wouldn't work. It was odd. They had never seen anything like it before. And I couldn't be prouder. We jumped on it, we stayed with it, and we powered through it. Lots of difficulties along the way. But to see it succeed is like, "Yeah, that's a beautiful thing."

Jesse Moynihan: A topic that comes up in conversations I have with other people on the crew is the question, how long can we keep it up? How long can we keep it good? How will we know when it's run its course, and if we do know, are we willing to let it go? How do we make this season better than the last one? I walk down the street and ask myself this all the time. I'll be taking a break from drawing and wondering if this is the last season. But I've started to ask myself that since season four, I think. Then after each season I think to myself, "I think that was our best season." So I don't know. Maybe I'm crazy. When will I ever be able to work on a show again where I pretty much have the freedom to write whatever I want? At this point, almost no one is telling me *not* to do anything. I'm almost literally writing anything that comes to my head. It's an incredible gift, I think.


PFFT!

FAN ART







Above left: Fan art of Marceline in a strawberry field by Eric "TsaoShin" Proctor.

Above middle: Fan art of Finn and Flame Princess by Jo MinJeong.

Above right: Fan art of the Key-per by Tyson Murphy.



Left and below right: Fan art of the Ice King and Finn by John Suarez.

Below left: Fan art of Shoko (one of Finn's past-life selves) and her tiger by Yumi Chen.





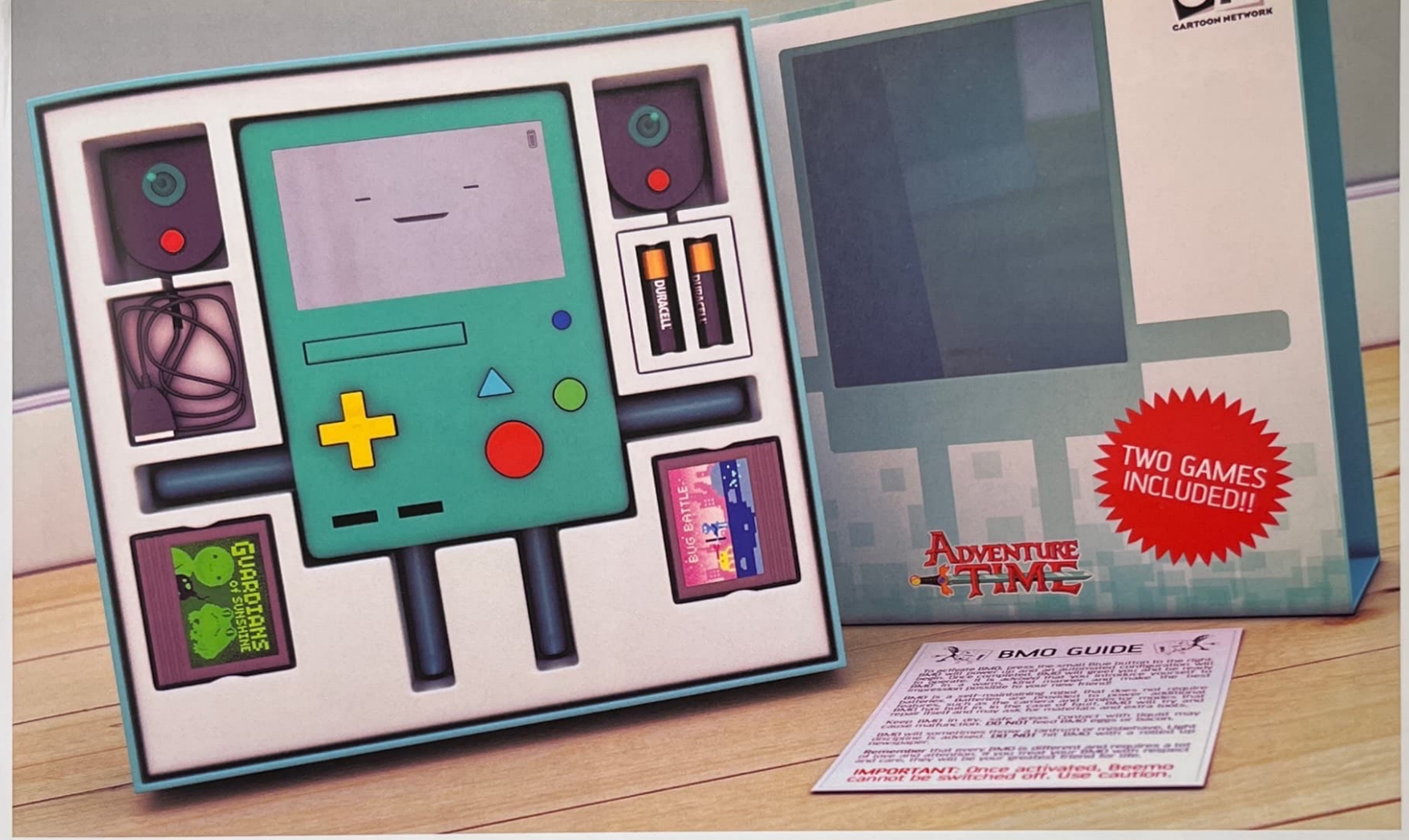
FAN ART

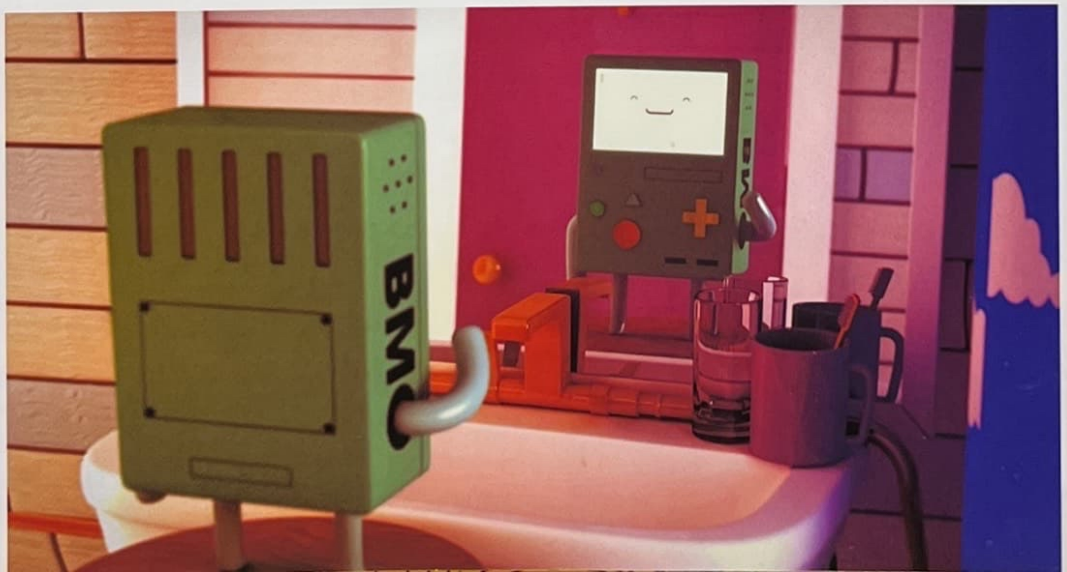




Above: Fan art of Finn and Jake by Victor Kerlow.

Right: Fan art of Finn and Jake by Richie Pope and Nicole Hamilton.





This page: Fan art illustrations of BMO created with 3-D software by John Alder. In John's concept, BMO comes packaged with two games included: Guardians of Sunshine and Bug Battle.





Left: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #5 (Cover B) by Eleanor Davis.

Above: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #2 (Cover C) by Emily Carroll.



Above: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #3 (Cover C) by *Adventure Time* character and prop designer Michael DeForge.



Above: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #6 (Cover D) by *Adventure Time* storyboard artist Steve Wolfhard.





Left: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #9 (Cover D) by Jon Vermilyea.

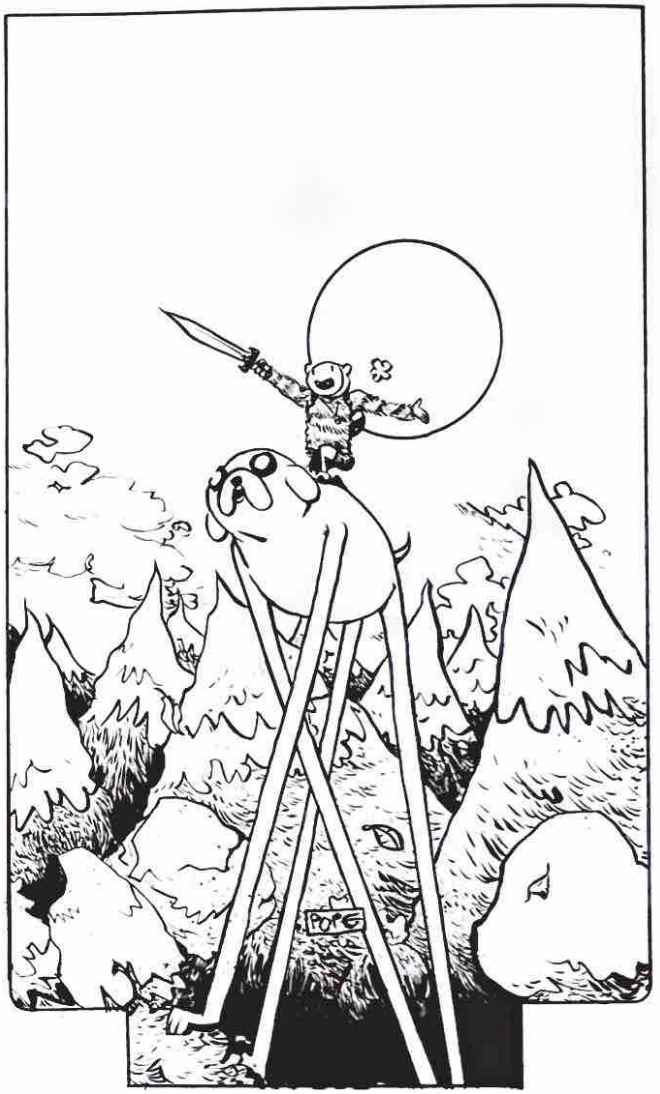
Above: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #4 (Cover D) by Bettie Ward ("Pen's mom," as it says in the signature).



Above: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #1 (San Diego Comic-Con International 2012 exclusive cover) by Pen Ward.

Right: Cover art for *Adventure Time Summer Special 2013* (Cover B) by Phil McAndrew.





Left: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #14 (Cover D) by Ming Doyle.

Above: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #11 (Cover D) by Paul Pope.



Above: Cover art for *Adventure Time Annual* #1 (Cover B) by *Adventure Time* character and prop designer and storyboard revisionist Natasha Allegri.

Right: Cover art for *Adventure Time* #10 (Cover D) by Nick Edwards.

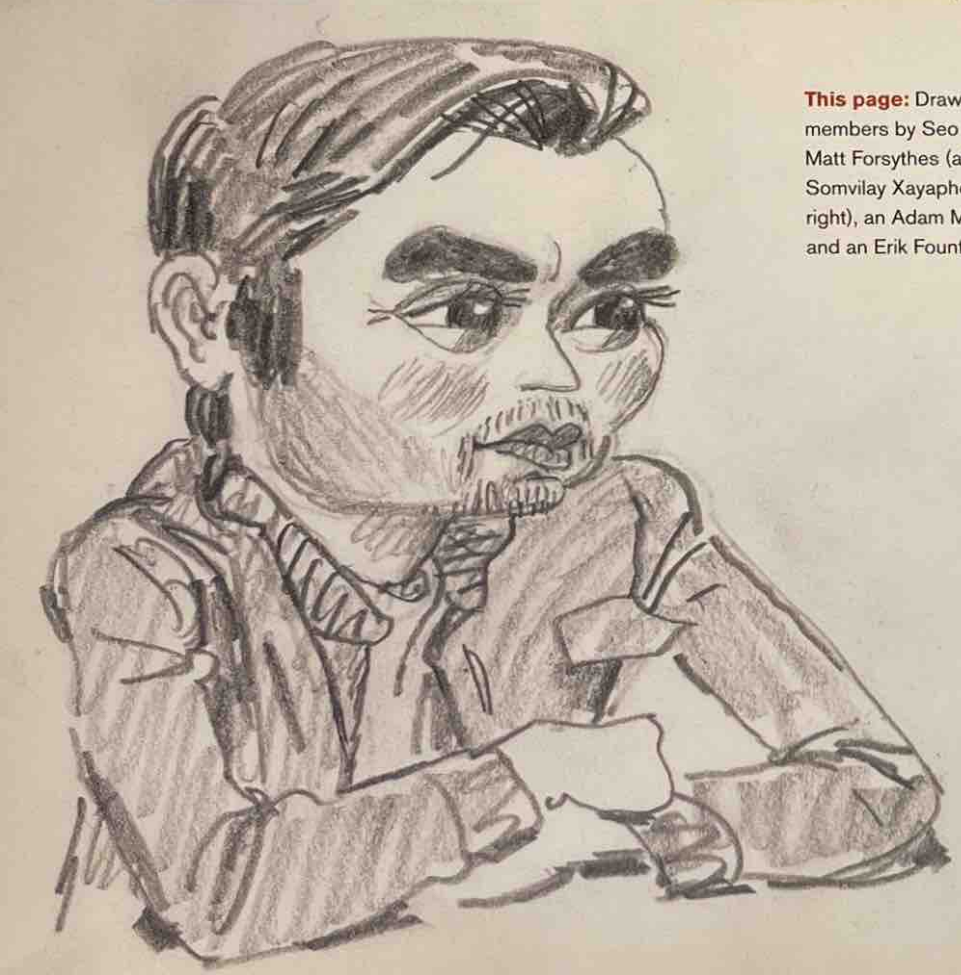
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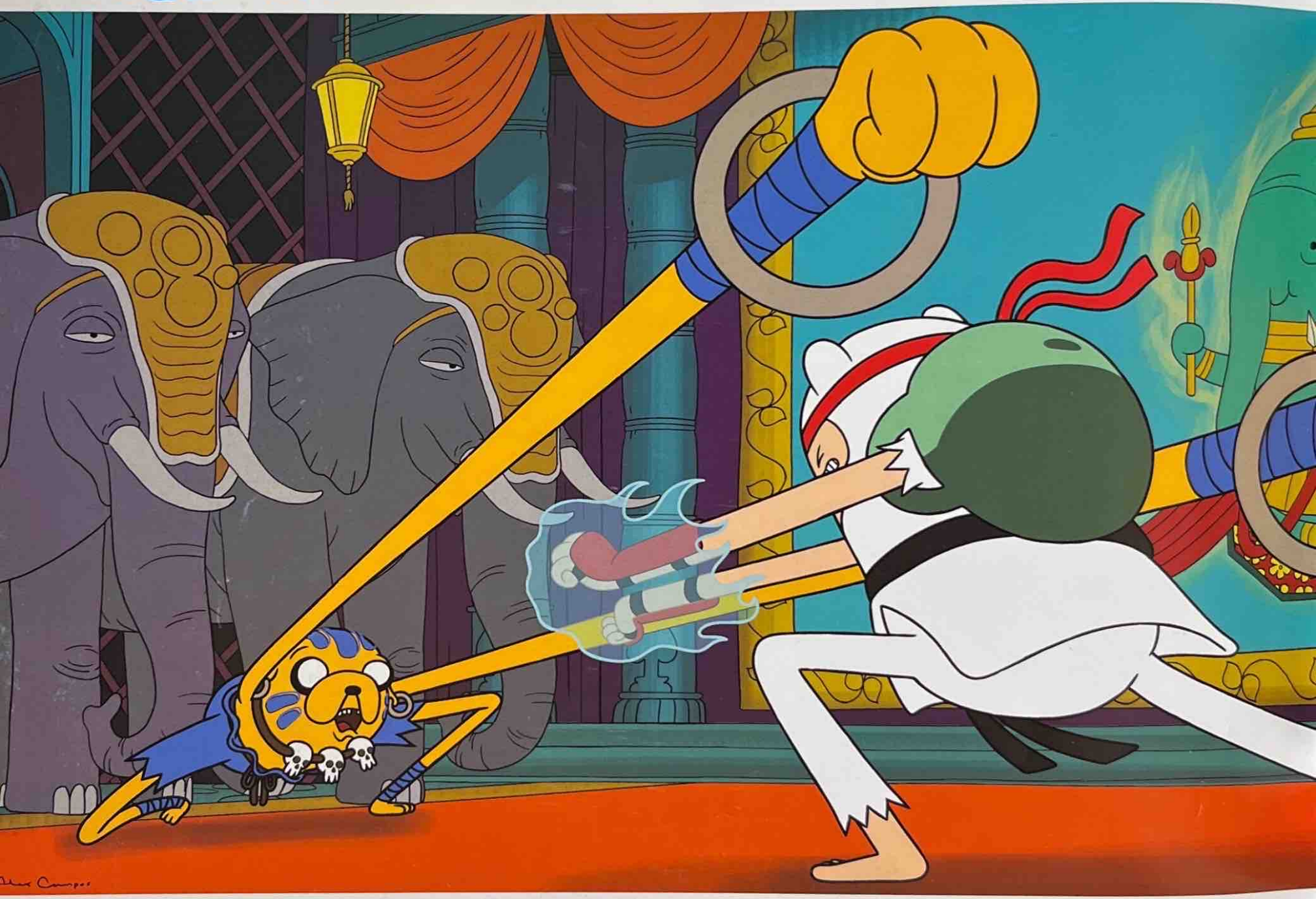
This page: Drawings of crew members by Seo Kim. Two Matt Forsythes (above left), a Somvilay Xayaphone (above right), an Adam Muto (left), and an Erik Fountain (right).







This page: Two Tom Herpichs (above left), a Kent Osborne (above middle), a Seo Kim self-portrait (above right), a Jesse Moynihan (below left), an Elizabeth Ito (below middle), and a Steve Wolfhard (below right).









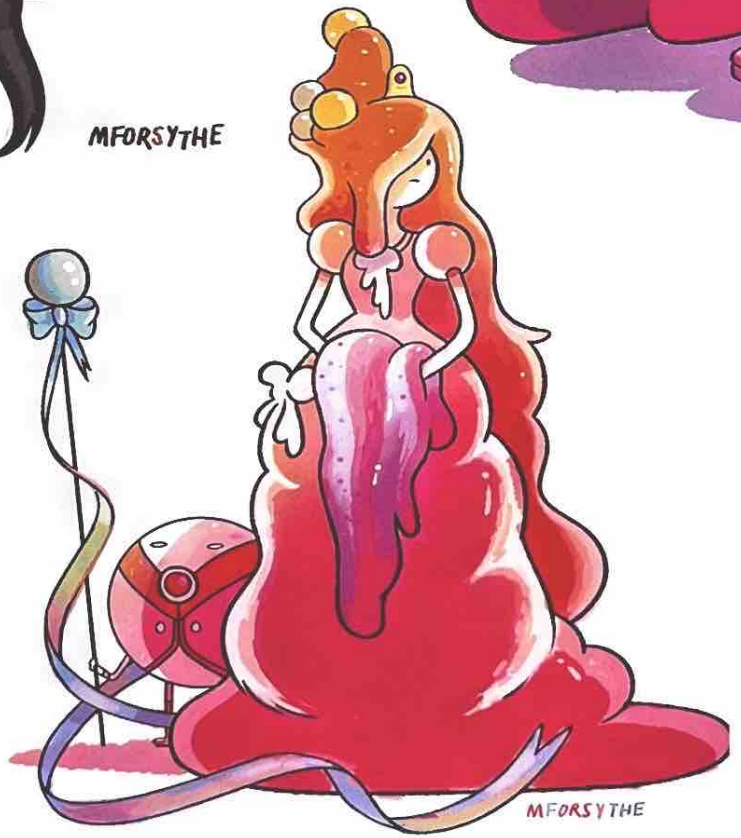
This spread: Personal artwork by clean-up artist Alex Campos. "On the show, what I do essentially is digitally ink the rough character, props, and EFX that are designed by the character and prop designers. Daily I get a folder with rough character models and turns, and I use Illustrator to give them a vector-based line quality and thickness that matches the established look of the show. I also occasionally will make adjustments or tweaks in perspective or structure of the models if the show is particularly heavy. This makes it easier for our color stylist to do their job and the animation studios to animate since they don't have to second-guess the design. Outside of the show I enjoy doing video-game mash-ups with various pop culture icons. Building up a collection of retro games and incorporating them into my illustrations keeps me entertained. I especially like putting characters from other mediums into older, pixelated start-up screens, like the "Super Adventure Time" piece, and putting video-game characters into established movie posters or album covers."

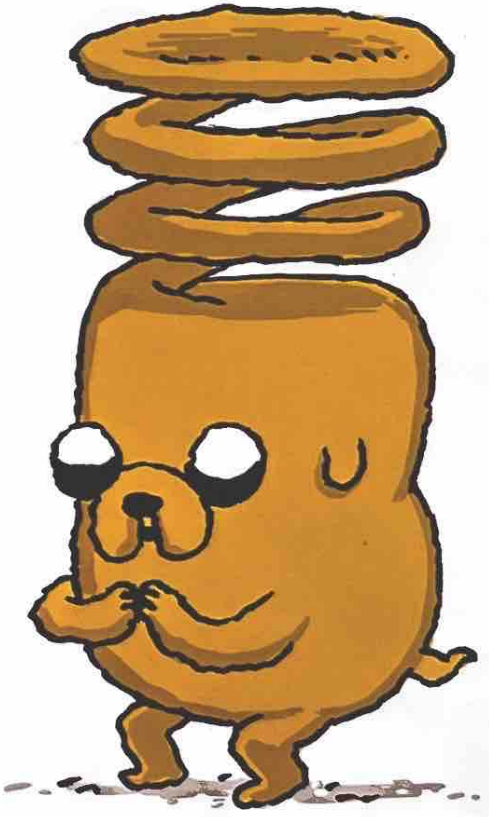
CREW ART











This page: Occasionally before beginning a new episode of material, lead designer Matt Forsythe creates warm-up drawings of featured characters, such as these, drawn in a personal style.



This page: Storyboard revisionist Julia Srednicki creates Post-it drawings to warm-up and test out her pens. This also serves as practice for the many tiny but clearly defined drawings that the revisionist position requires.





Left: An unofficial promotional piece by Luke Pearson for "Frost and Fire," the episode featuring Flame Princess and Finn's falling out, co-storyboarded by Luke and Somvilay Xayaphone.

Above and opposite: Unofficial promotional pieces by Jesse Moynihan for the episodes "Death in Bloom" and "The Limit," both co-storyboarded with Cole Sanchez. These personal works fall outside of the official job requirements of a storyboard artist, but have become a popular habit among storyboard artists at the Cartoon Network Studio as another way to personally connect with fans. These pieces also reinforce the sense of authorship that storyboard artists enjoy on board-driven shows such as *Adventure Time*.


THE LIMIT
JMOYNS
CPSANCH

COMBINED ADVENTURE TIME CREDITS (SEASONS 1-5)

Created by:
Pendleton Ward

Executive Producers:
Fred Seibert
Pendleton Ward

Creative Directors:
Patrick McHale
Cole Sanchez
Adam Muto
Nate Cash

Art Director:
Nick Jennings

Storyboarders:
Elizabeth Ito
Adam Muto
Pendleton Ward
Luther McLaurin
Armen Mirzaian
Sean Jimenez
Bert Youn
Kent Osborne
Peter Browngardt
Niki Yang
JG Quintel
Cole Sanchez
Ako Castuera
Somvilay Xayaphone
Benton Connor
Rebecca Sugar
Tom Herpich
Jesse Moynihan
Skyler Page
Steve Wolfhard
Michael DeForge
Graham Falk
Thomas Wellmann
Luke Pearson
Seo Kim
Andy Ristaino
Derek Ballard
Madéleine Flores
Jillian Tamaki
Sam Alden

Producer:
Kelly Crews

Supervising Producers:
Adam Muto
Nick Jennings

Supervising Directors:
Thurop Van Orman
Larry Leichliter
Adam Muto
Nate Cash
Elizabeth Ito
Andres Salaff

Story Editors:
Merriwether Williams
Craig Lewis
Mark Banker

Head of Story:
Kent Osborne

Staff Writers:
Tim McKeon
Steve Little
Kent Osborne
Patrick McHale
Jack Pendarvis

Writer's Apprentice:
Dick Grunert

"Guardians of Sunshine"
3-D Animation Sequence:
Ke Jiang (Jacky)

"A Glitch Is a Glitch"
Producer:
David OReilly
Animation Director:
David OReilly
Animation Producer:
Jakob Schuh
Animators:
John Coomey
Robert Lehman
Peter Ruschel
Max Stohr
Tobias Von Burkersroda
Character Riggers:
Mark Feller
Parzival Rothlein
3-D Set Modeler:
Charles Hodgkins
Lead Compositor:
David OReilly
2-D FX Animator:
Curtis Baigent
3-D FX Animator:
David OReilly
End Credit Song:
Flying Lotus
Character Animation Studio:
Studio Soi
Producer for Studio Soi:
Torben Meier

"James Baxter the Horse"
Character Design:
James Baxter
Animation:
James Baxter

"Bad Timing"
Microbe Animation Direction:
Erik Fountain
Animation:
Erik Fountain
Julia Srednicki
Dana Terrace
Emily Quinn
Aleth Romanillos
Charlotte Jackson
Compositing:
Emily Quinn

"Food Chain"
Director:
Masaaki Yuasa
Storyboards:
Masaaki Yuasa

Storyboard Supervisors:
Nate Cash
Ian Jones-Quartey
Erik Fountain

Supervising Director:
Larry Leichliter

Timing Director:
Don Judge

Sheet Timing:
Russell Calabrese
Don Judge
Gordon Kent
Christine Kolosov
Robert Renzetti
Jamie Mitchell
Bob Nesler
Woody Yocum
Terry Lennon
Art Vitello
Trell Yocum
John McIntyre
Jungja Kim-Wolf
Michel Lyman
Helen Roh
Jung Yon Kwon
Rich Collado
Larry Leichliter
Phil Cummings
Andrew Overtoom

Co-Producer:
Pendleton Ward

Production Managers:
Keith Mack
Scott Malchus

Production Coordinators:
Dick Grunert
Scott Malchus
Joseph Eduardo Game Cooke

Production Assistants:
David C. Smith
Patrick Seery
Joseph Eduardo Game Cooke
Andy Garner-Flexner
Emily Quinn

Lead Character & Prop Designers:
Phil Rynda
Andy Ristaino
Matt Forsythe

Character & Prop Designers:
Tom Herpich
Andy Ristaino
Natasha Allegri
Michelle Xin
Michael DeForge
Matt Forsythe
Matthew Houston
Erica Jones
Chris Houghton
Phil Rynda

Character & Prop Design Clean-up:
Mike Collins
Alex Campos

Background Designers:
Ghostshrimp
Santino Lascano
Chris Tsirgiotis
Derek Hunter
Jon Vermilyea
Peter Herpich

Background Painters:
Martin Ansolabehere
Sue Mondt
Sandra Calleros
Ron Russell
Teri Shikasho

Color Stylists:
Sandra Calleros
Ron Russell
Catherine E. Simmonds

Animatic Timers:
Hugo Morales
Andy Tauke
Oliver Akuin
Gred Levitan
Bobby Hernandez
Andrew Haug

Animatic Scanner:
Tammy List
Oliver Akuin

Storyboard Revisions:
Ako Castuera
Wayne Carlisi
Eric McConnell
Bert Youn
Mike Milo
Somvilay Xayaphone
Armen Mirzaian
Mark O'Hare
Jiwook Kim
Bob Cavin III
Rebecca Sugar
Ian Jones-Quartey
Jesse Moynihan
David C. Smith
Natasha Allegri
Stephen De Stefano
Skyler Page
Madeline Queripel
Brett Varon
Julia Srednicki
Antony Mazzotta
Destiny Wood
Emily Partridge
Erik Fountain
Luke Pearson
Madéleine Flores
Michael DeForge

Nick Edwards
Robertryan Cory
Ryan Pequin
Seo Kim
Shion Takeuchi
Steven Sugar
Steve Wolfhard
Aleth Romanillos

Voice Direction:
Collette Sunderman
Keythe Farley
Kent Osborne
Nate Cash
Pendleton Ward

Recording Studio Manager:
Karie Gima Pham

Recording Engineer:
Robert Serda

Supervising Editor:
Paul Douglas

Picture Editor:
Paul Douglas

Dialogue Editor:
Krandal Crews

Director Production Technology:
Antonio Gonella

Composers:
Casey James Basichis
Tim Kiefer
"A Glitch Is a Glitch":
Bram Meindersma
"No Wonder I" for "Shh!":
Performed by LAKE
Written by Elijah Moore
Lyrics by Ashley Eriksson

"Gone with the Tide" & "Ice King & the Island Lady":
Written & Lyrics by Patrick McHale
"Poor Little Lemonhope":
Written by Steve Wolfhard & Casey Basichis
Lyrics by Steve Wolfhard
"Get Over You":
Written & Lyrics by Andy Ristaino
"Maybe Later":
Written & Lyrics by Cole Sanchez
"Lemonhope's Got Feet":
Written by Leslie Wolfhard
Lyrics by Leslie Wolfhard & Steve Wolfhard
"Young Lemonhope":
Written & Lyrics by: Tom Herpich

Music Editor:
Nick Carr

Main Title Song:
Pendleton Ward
Casey James Basichis

End Credit Song:
Ashley Eriksson

Post Production Sound Studios:
Sabre Media Studios

Supervising Sound Editors:
Tom Syslo
Timothy J. Borquez, MPSE

Sound Editors:
Tony Orozco
Bram Meindersma

Re-Recording Mixers:
Eric Freeman
Timothy J. Borquez, C.A.S.

Post Production Supervisor:
Tony Tedford

Post Production Coordinator:
Alicia Parkinson

Machine Room Operator:
Chris Hoetger

Animation Checking:
Sandy Benenati
Vicki Casper

Track Reading By:
Slightly Off Track

Production Estimator:
Cecilia Rheins

Production Administration:
Linda Barry

Overseas Production Facilities:
Rough Draft Korea Co., Ltd
Saerom Animation, Inc

Overseas Directors:
Dongkun Won
Bonghui Han

For Frederator Studios:
Associate Producer:
Eric Homan

Supervising Producer:
Kevin Kolde

For Cartoon Network Studios:
Executive Producers:
Brian A. Miller
Jennifer Pelphrey

For Cartoon Network:
Executive Producers:
Curtis Lelash
Rob Sorcher
Current Series Executive:
Conrad Montgomery

Voices:
Isabella Acres
Ava Acres
James Adomian
Steve Agee
Michael J. Anderson
Aziz Ansari
Dee Bradley Baker
Maria Bamford
Brian Baumgartner
Eric Bauza
James Baxter
Jeff Glen Bennett
Jessica Bogart
Creed Bratton
Matthew Broderick
Clancy Brown
Peter Browngardt
Levar Burton
Jackie Buscarino
Ako Castuera
Max Charles
Katie Crown
Jim J. Cummings
Andy Daly
Keith David
Collin Dean
Grey DeLisle
Jessica DiCicco
John DiMaggio
Michael Dorn
Brian Doyle-Murray
Lena Dunham
Susie Essman
Erik Estrada
Donald Faison
Violet Sole Closs Farley
Keith Ferguson
Miguel Ferrer
Lou Ferrigno
Jonathan Frakes
Isabelle Fuhrman
Rich Fulcher
Tom Gammill
Ghostshrimp
Donald Glover
Bobcat Goldthwait
Mark Hamill
Neil Patrick Harris
Anne Heche
Tom Herpich
John Hodgman
Melinda Hill
Toby Huss
Davey Johnson
Matt Jones
John Kassir
Jonathan Katz
Kerri Kenney-Silver
Tom Kenny
Kyla Rae Kowalewski
Howard Kremer
James Kyson
Maurice LaMarche
Phil LaMarr
Cloris Leachman
Randy Liedtke
Wendy Linehan
Henry Linehan
Steve Little
Polly Lou Livingston
Ron Lynch
Sam Marin
Marc Maron
Madeline Martin
Andy Merrill
Kate Micucci
Andy Milonakis
Dan Mintz
Christopher Monahan
John Moschitta Jr.
Kumail Nanjiani
Noah Nelson
Martin Olson
Olivia Olson
Shyloh Oostwald
Kent Osborne
Johnny Pemberton
Jack Pendarvis
Ron Perlman
Emo Philips
Roddy Piper
Brian Posehn
Mark Proksch
Vincenzo Rauso
Paul Reubens
Kevin Michael Richardson
Justin Roiland
Henry Rollins
Stephen Root
Roz Ryan
Andy Samberg
Cole Sanchez
Kristen Schaal
Paul Scheer
Jeremy Shada
Wallace Shawn
Mandy Siegfried
Laura Silverman
Marina Sirtis
Tamar Stevens
Dana Snyde
Peter Stormare
George Takei
Jill Talley
Fred Tatasciore
Paul F. Tompkins
Duncan Trussell
Gregg Turkington
Thurop Van Orman
Melissa Villasenor
Hynden Walch
M. Emmet Walsh
Pendleton Ward
Ming-Na Wen
Rainn Wilson
Tom Wilson
Niki Yang
Al Yankovic

COMBINED ADVENTURE TIME CREDITS (SEASONS 1-5)

For Rough Draft Korea Co., Ltd:

Supervising Director:
Dongkun Won

Animation Directors:
Dongkun Won
Kwangbae Park

Senior Producer:
Chulho Kim

Production Manager:
Minsuk Kim
Hyunsik Hahm
Kilhong Kim

Senior Head of Translation:
Yeonhwa Jeong

Translators:
Youngwon Kim
Mirae Lee
Hyunjung Lee

Layout Director:
Yongkyung Choi

Layout Artists:
Eunju Lee
Dongsun Bang
Sooyeon Kwan
Eunkyung Kim

Animators:
Soojung Kang
Byungjae Oh
Hyunju Jung
Songeun Lee
Taesoon Kim
Kyungsook Kim
Meejung Choi
Sunhee Shin
Insook Cho
Heesoon Kim

Model Checker:
Hyekyung Park

Chief of Assist Animation:
Boyoung Sung
Sungsook Cho

Assist Animators:
Youngmi Kang
Meejin Kim
Junghoon Park
Meejung Song
Meehyang Won
Meesun Jeon
Hyunhee Cho
Jiyeon Hwang
Bomin Kim
Jinhee Kim
Junhee Park
Kyungsun Bae
Jinyoung Yu
Hwasoon Lee
Hyunmee Jung
Eunju Ji
Eunju Hwang
Byungjo Kwan
Hyerhan Kim
Sookyung Seo
Soojung Ahn
Yunkyung Lee
Meejung Cho
Meehwa Hong
Soyoung Kang
Yumee Kim
Heeyeon Kim
Meeyeon Bang
Eunyoung Seo
Sangeun Lee
Kyunghee Jang
Namhee Cho
Yeonyeol Choi
Junghoon Kwan
Mikyung Moon
Eunju Seo
Minah Yang
Kyunghye Jang
Yangsook Cho
Sooyoung Hwang
Meeyea Kim
Eunhee Kim
Suksoon Noh
Sunghyun Bae
Sunok Yu
Hyunhee Lee
Younghee Jung
Hyejin Cho
Meejin Han

Animation Checking:
Hoon Jung
Hyukjun Kim

Unit Digital Supervisor:
Seho Na
Doohwan Kim

Chief of Compositing:
Sangkyun Cha
Heejung Jung

Camera Compositing:
Hyunwook Cho
Changwook Lee
Gyuhwan Ahn
Kiyoung Park
Jaewook Shim
Hyun Min
Wonjun Hwang
Jin Yun
Sungmin Yun

Digital San/X-Sheeting:
Chunhwa Ahn
Hyunju Lee
Jinyoung Kim
Sohye Kim
Jiyeon Jung
Mijung Kim

Chief of Ink & Paint:
Hyunah Kim
Myungsoon Kim

Palette:
Hyunjung Yang
Taesun Kwan

Ink & Paint:
Okhee Kwan
Jinsook Kim
Jiwon Park
Kyungah Shin
Seunghee Koh
Sangeun Lee
Yeonjung Ju
Byungsup Kim
Jinhee Kim
Kangsook Back
Oksun Ji
Myunghwe Ahn
Jin Kim
Myungsook Kwan
Seunghye Kim
Junghwa Park
Soojung Sung
Eunok Hong
Hyunkyung Lee
Hyunah Park
Soonil Yu

Background Painting:
Eunyoung Lee

CG Supervisor:
Woosung Jung

CG Animation/Modeling:
Byunseung Min
Alex Ha

Chief of Editing/Technical:
Haejin Park
Heechul Kang

Editors:
Daewook Kim
Yoonsuk Lee
Yeonsuk Ryu
Donghoon Lee

For Saerom Animation, Inc:

Supervising Director:
Bonghui Han

Animation 1:
Bonghui Han
Bokgyeong Kang
Miyeong Kim
Sangryul Ann
Gyeonghwa Lee
Gyeho Lee
Wonhui Han

Animation 2:
Cheolhui Han
Eunmi Bae
Jangpil Lee
Seokjin Yun

In-between A:
Nyeongja Kim
Miran Kang
Seonyeong Kang
Yeonhui Kim
Yeonga Kim
Yunmi Kim
Eunsuk Kim
Eunhui Kim
Jeongsuk Bak
Geumyeong Shin
Eunhui Shin
Jeongsik Shin
Yeongju Yu
Jiyeon Yu
Yuseon Lee
Yunju Lee
Hyeryeon Lee
Hayeong Lim
Eunjin Jung
Munseon Joe
Jina Kim

In-between B:
Hyejeong Lee
Sanghui Kang
Soyeong Kwak
Gyeonghui Kim
Nayeon Kim
Mijeong Kim
Boksun Kim
Yongju Kim
Hyeonjeong Kim
Hyeran Bak
Yunmi Shin
Yujin O
Gyeongsuk Lee
Euna Lee
Bongyeong Jun
Seonghui Jung
Seongsuk Jee
Myohui Han
Miok Han
Sanghyeon Han

In-between C:
Eunjo Bak
Eunmi Kim
Hyeseon Kim
Seonhye Bak
Suncheon Bak
Eunsuk Bak
Eunsil Bak
Jeongnam Bak
Jeongae Bak
Yunseon Song
Jeongmin Byeon
Mija Ann
Hyeonnam Yang
Huisu Yun
Jihye Lee
Haegyeong Jang
Yunjeong Jung
Jeonghwa Choi
Migyeong Hong

In-between D:
Hyekyung Sun
Kyungok Kim
Kyunghee Kim
Seoyoung Kim
Yoonjeong Kim
Hyojin Kim

Sookkyung Park
Jisook Park
Jiho Park
Seunghee Son
Seonmi Oh
Jiwon Lee
Yunhee Lim
Mi Jang
Seonyoung Jang
Youngseon Jang
Juyoung Jeong
Hyanghee Chae
Yukyung Ha
Yeon Dokgo
Mija Kim

Layout:
Jaeyoung Cho
Hyosuk Yoon
Younghee Choi
Seungwoo Shin
Younghwan Lee

Color:
Insuk Jeong
Seoyoon Kang
Jeongmi Kang
Eunjin Koh
Mikyung Moon
Miyoung Moon
Myungseon Kim
Seonhee Park
Jinhee Park
MiRye Bang
Nana Shin
Sooyeon Lim
Taesoo Lim
Sungsuk Jeong
Uiyoung Jung
Yeonsook Cho
Youngsuk Hong
Seonghee Hwang
Myunghee Jung
Okseon Lee
Kyunghee Lee
Kyungmin Yang
Eunsuk Moon

Compositing:
Mija Eun
Miseon Park
Jeongeun Park
Jooseong Lee
Jihwan Hwang
Seonghee Park

BG 1:
Byeongun Kwak
Mina Koh
Miok Kim
Yanghee Kim
Yoonkyung Kim
Myungsuk Park
Sangmyung Lee
Eunkyung Lee
Sohyun Park
Hyuna Ji
Eunjeon Moon
Hyewan Choi

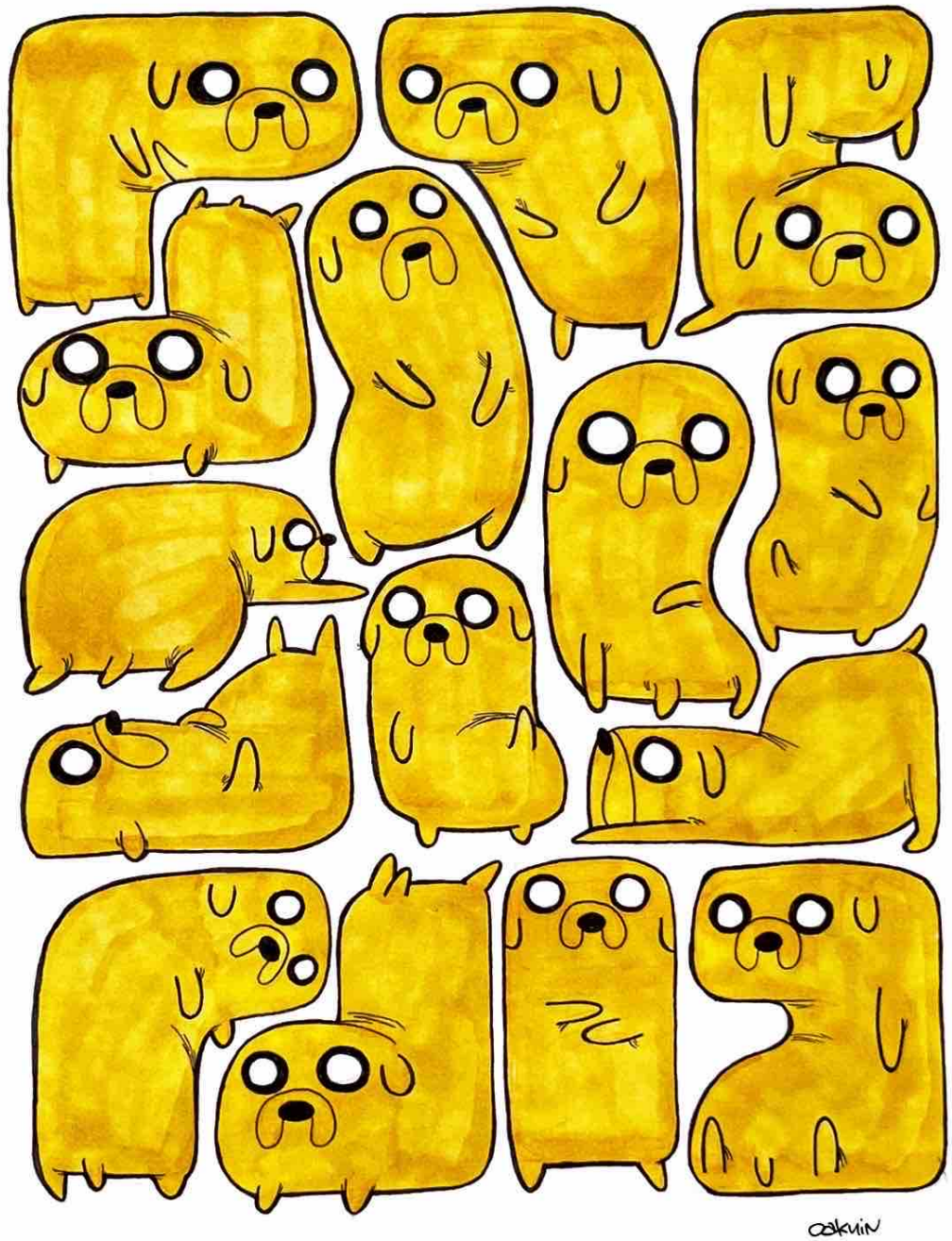
BG 2:
Mija Choi
Insuk Kwon
Seonmi Lee
Yoonjeong Jung
Yongsuk Son
Hyeryung Park
Youngseon Lee

Clean up:
Hyejin Lim
Sumi Lee
Hyeyoung Cho

Final check:
Taesoo Park
Miyoung Park

Production:
Gichul Choi
Gangtae Lee

President:
Gilhwan Kim



Left: Personal artwork by Oliver Akuin.

Editor: Eric Klopfer
Designer: Chris McDonnell
Production Manager: True Sims

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Left: Personal artwork by Matt Forsythe.

Front and back endpaper: Personal artwork by Thomas Wellmann.

I would like to acknowledge with gratitude my collaborators and friends all across the cartooning, animation, and publishing worlds who helped to create this book. Special thanks to Kelly, Scott, Emily, and Jason for wrangling art and talent; to Jobina, Ralph, Stephen, Vincent, Cory, Tom, Phil, Jesse, Pen, Adam, Pat, Kent, Andy, Cole, Steve, Seo, Rebecca, Ian, Erik, Matt, Nick, Elizabeth, Amid, Jerry, Lee, and Anita for their efforts, advice, and/or inspiration; to Eric for his positivity-infused patience and editing, and to the entire *Adventure Time* crew that lent their work and insight to this volume. Thank you. For J and the boys.

—Chris McDonnell, Philadelphia, April 2014









CHRIS MCDONNELL has created animation for *Comedy Bang! Bang!*, *Kroll Show*, *Brody Stevens: Enjoy It!*, *Eagleheart*, *Portlandia*, *Yo Gabba Gabba!*, *Tim and Eric Awesome Show, Great Job!*, and *Tom Goes to the Mayor*. Chris's books include *Sasquatch's Big, Hairy Drawing Book* and *Unfiltered: The Complete Ralph Bakshi*. He is a contributing writer to the animation blog *Cartoon Brew*, and a founding member of the *Meathaus* comics collective. He works from his studio, McD Workshop, in Philadelphia, where he lives with his wife and two sons.

GUILLERMO DEL TORO made his feature directorial debut with *Cronos*, which went on to win the Critics' Prize at the 1993 Cannes International Film Festival. Since then, his films have included *The Devil's Backbone*, *Hellboy I* and *II*, three-time Academy Award®–winner *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Pacific Rim*, and his latest, *Crimson Peak*. Together with Chuck Hogan, he has written three novels, *The Strain* trilogy, which have now become an FX television series.

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New York, NY 10011
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